AN INNER-BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION AND INTERTEXTUAL READING OF EZEKIEL'S RECOGNITION FORMULAE WITH THE BOOK OF EXODUS

BY

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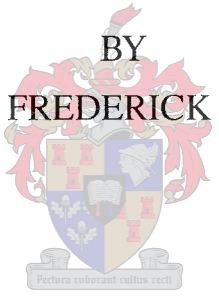

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

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ABSTRACT

One of the most striking literary phenomena in the entire Old Testament, Ezekiel's recognition formula is repeated over seventy times. According to S. R. Driver that refrain, "You shall know that I am Yahweh," strikes the keynote of the prophecy. Though one might expect to find many monographs and journal articles treating at length the formula's literary and theological function in Ezekiel, the only substantial work on the subject comes from Walther Zimmerli and is nearly fifty years old. More recent scholarly discussion has tended to be oblique, occasional, or subordinate to other interests.

Brevard Childs has suggested that Ezekiel shows a "preoccupation with Scripture." Applying this insight, the dissertation at hand argues the thesis that the seventy-odd recognition formulae in Ezekiel mark a theological nexus and intertextual relationship between the prophecy and the book of Exodus (in some recensional form), and that those formulae are best interpreted alongside the numerous recognition formulae in Exodus. Interpreted intertextually, Ezekiel's formula points readers of the oracles to know Yahweh as the God of the Exodus, who still acts, in covenant, to judge and to deliver. Here the term intertextuality is used in a broader sense to include both a more diachronic "intertextuality of production" (Ellen van Wolde), in which a text can only be written in relationship to other texts, and a more synchronic "intertextuality of reception," in which a text can be read only in relationship to other texts. With regard to methodology, the approach of inner-biblical interpretation is employed to explore the text-production angle and the questions which emerge concerning the re-use and re-presentation of Scriptural "traditions." Also appropriate is a synchronic intertextual approach which inquires how Exodus and Ezekiel texts—in particular the recognition formulae—may be read together from a text-reception angle. Both approaches used together reveal a large number of parallels between Exodus and Ezekiel and indicate how well the recognition formulae may be read together.

This study contributes to scholarship by offering an extensive review of past scholarship on the formula; a fresh exegetical research of the formula's use in Ezekiel and in other Bible books, with comparisons drawn; a study of the socio-historical and religious context addressed by Ezekiel's oracles and the formula; and a theological interpretation of the recognition formulae in Ezekiel alongside those in Exodus. There are many strong conjunctions (or continuities) between the formulae in Ezekiel and Exodus: a covenant stress; no positive use of the formula when spoken to the nations; an unbreakable link to announcements of Yahweh's mighty acts in history; etc. Yet there is also a jarring disjunction (or discontinuity) between the formulae in Ezekiel and Exodus: the prophecy repeatedly declares that Israel "shall know that I am Yahweh" in judgment. This is "a radical inversion of its former usage" (Carley); elsewhere in Scripture the formula always sounds a positive note when spoken to Israel.

OPSOMMING

Een van die mees opvallende literêre kenmerke van die hele Ou Testament, is Esegiël se gebruikmaking van die erkenningsformule – meer as 70 maal! Volgens S.R. Driver vorm hierdie refrein, "Julle sal weet dat Ek Jahwe is", die kern van die profesie. Hoewel 'n mens sou verwag dat talle monografieë en tydskrifartikels aan hierdie formule gewy sou word, is dit slegs Walther Zimmerli wat byna 50 jaar gelede grondige navorsing in die verband gedoen het. Meer onlangse navorsing was ondeursigtig en ondergeskik aan ander oorwegings.

Brevard Childs het voorgestel dat Esegiël 'n "preoccupation with Scripture" vertoon. Teen hierdie agtergrond argumenteer hierdie proefskrif dat die erkenningsformules in die boek Esegiël die teologiese kern aandui en dat daar 'n intertekstuele verband tussen die profesië van Esegiël en die Eksodusboek bestaan. Wanneer die erkenningsformule in Esegiël intertekstueel verstaan word, dan ontstaan daar 'n verband tussen die godsprake en Jahwe as die God van die Eksodus, wie steeds binne verbondsverband as Regter en Redder optree. In die verband word die begrip "intertekstualiteit" in 'n breë sin verstaan en dit sluit in 'n meer diakroniese "intertextuality of production" (Ellen van Wolde). Hiervolgens kan 'n teks slegs in verhouding tot ander tekste geskryf word. In dieselfde asem moet daar ook na die meer sinkroniese "intertextuality of reception" verwys word, waarvolgens 'n teks slegs gelees kan word in verband met ander tekste. Op metodologiese vlak word "innerbiblical interpretation" benut om ondersoek in te stel na teksproduksie en die vrae wat ontstaan na aanleiding van die hergebruik en hervoorstelling van Bybelse "tradisies". Dit is verder ook van toepassing om 'n sinkroniese intertekstuele benadering te gebruik wat vrae stel oor hoe Eksodus en Esegiël (veral die erkenningsformules) in samehang gelees kan word indien dit vanuit 'n teksresepsie hoek benader word.. Beide benaderings kan deur saam gebruik te word, 'n groot aantal parallele tussen Eksodus en Esegiël ontdek en aantoon hoe die erkenningsformules saam gelees kan word.

Hierdie proefskrif se bydrae tot die vakgebied behels 'n omvattende oorsig van bestaande navorsing oor die erkenningsformule; 'n vars eksegetiese ondersoek en vergelyking van die erkenningsformule se gebruik in Esegiël en in ander boeke van die Bybel; 'n studie van die sosio-historiese en godsdienstige konteks wat deur die godsprake en erkenningsformule in Esegiël aangespreek word; asook 'n teologiese interpretasie van die erkenningsformules in Esegiel en in samehang met die formules in Eksodus. Daar is opvallende voorbeelde van sterk verbande tussen die formules in Esegiël en Eksodus: die klem op die verbond; geen positiewe gebruik van die formules wanneer dit met die vreemde nasies in verband gebring word nie; 'n onlosmaaklike band met die aankondigings van Jahwe se magtige dade in die geskiedenis; ens. Tog is daar ook 'n mate van steurende diskontinuïteit tussen die formules in Esegiël en Eksodus: die profesieë wat telkens herhaal dat Israel juis binne die oordeel "sal weet dat Ek Jahwe is". Dit behels 'n radikale omkeer van die bestaande gebruik (Carley); omdat daar elders in die Bybel slegs voorbeelde is waar die erkenningsformules in 'n positiewe manier ten opsigte van Israel uitgespreek word.

FOR ELIZABETH

מחמד עיני

"Take then, Love, the book and me together"
– Robert Browning

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My interest in the subject of this thesis was first aroused years ago during a semester long independent study under the tutelage of a seminary professor, Gerard Van Groningen. Accordingly, I should first like to thank that true friend for all his encouragement to study the oft-neglected Prophet Ezekiel and to research the repetitious refrain which scholarship has denominated the "recognition formula." I must also express my gratitude to Professor Robert Vasholz—a Stellenbosch D.Th.—who introduced me to the study of both Hebrew and the prophetical books. That this dissertation has finally been completed is owing to the patience and wise guidance of my advisor, Professor H. L. Bosman. I heartily thank him, as well as other members of my committee.

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the many courtesies extended to me over the past five years by the library staff at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. While I was in the USA on home mission assignment in 2000-01 and 2004-05, the library staff, under the direction of Professors David Bundy and Lorna Shoemaker, were unfailingly helpful to this outsider in garnering inter-library loan materials. Three others also deserving thanks are: my brother, Professor William B. Evans, who gave timely assistance in accessing articles unavailable to me in Africa; Dr. Andrew Mein, an Ezekiel scholar lecturing at Westcott House in Cambridge, who read a draft of most of my work and offered a good measure of encouragement and constructive criticism; and Dr. Bruce Winter, Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, together with his staff, for providing me a superb study environment for ten weeks to finalize the dissertation. To one accustomed to "making do" with fewer library resources, Tyndale House is "like the Garden of Eden" (Ezek 36:35).

I am deeply grateful to my wife Elizabeth (née Jennings) for the joy and moral support she has given me since our marriage twenty years ago. She continues to be my greatest encouragement and has sacrificed many evenings during my pastoral ministry and our missionary career so that I could be alone with my books and free from interruption. This *primum opus* is dedicated to her. The sacrifices of my children, Martyn, Beth and Daniel, are remembered too. Finally, it must be added that, without the support and prayers of our mission (SIM), our American financial partners, and our colleagues at the Theological College of Central Africa (Ndola, Zambia), this thesis would never have been attempted, let alone completed. It is a privilege to be their servant for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:5).

PREFACE

Because of his influential contributions to Ezekiel study, especially the massive two volumes in Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, Walther Zimmerli has effectively defined the terminology which scholarship will use in the coming decades. This is especially true with regard to the refrain, "then you shall know that I am Yahweh." Zimmerli used three terms in discussing that refrain: *Erkenntnisaussage, Erkenntnisformel,* and *Erweiswort.* The last of these refers to a more general category of literary structure which includes the formula (See Zimmerli's 1957 article, *"Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises [Erweiswort], eine prophetische Gattung"*). *Erkenntnisaussage*, like *Erweiswort*, also has a more general application, referring to a wide variety of ידע statements found throughout the Old Testament, including the characteristic refrain of Ezekiel. Examining all of Zimmerli's writings, one concludes that he uses the first of the terms, *Erkenntnisaussage*, slightly more often than the second term, *Erkenntnisformel.* Among English-speaking scholars the second term, translated as "recognition formula," now is a decided preference.

I have chosen to make use of the key term, recognition formula, throughout the thesis along with other more general designations, such as "refrain," and "phrase." ("Formula" is used in the chapter titles.) In using the term, "recognition formula," which suggests a form-critical method, I hope none of the readers will misunderstand my intent. Neither my methodology nor my conclusions bear a close resemblance to form criticism as practiced by Zimmerli, though it can be argued that the discipline of form criticism greatly aids the scholar in reaching the goal of better understanding God's word.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations of biblical texts are my own.

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible Commentary
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Pritchard, ed.)
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BJRL	*Bulletin of John Rylands Library*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
DCH	*The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature

FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GKC	E. Kautzsch and A. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HALOT	*Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup	*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society (of Columbia University)*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JB	The Jerusalem Bible (1966)
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
KB	Koehler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*

NIV	New International Version (1984)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1985)
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation* (1985, 1999)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTE	*Old Testament Essays: Journal of the Old Testament Society of South Africa*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
THAT	*Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
ThWAT	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

INTRODUCTION

It is surely one of the most striking literary phenomena in the entire Old Testament. Readers of Ezekiel's prophecy discover that the phrase, וידעתם כי־אני יהוה "you shall know that I am Yahweh" (or one very similar to it), is repeated over seventy times. The refrain is so constant that some scholars have been tempted to call it "monotonous"[1] and "stereotyped."[2] Certainly it dominates the book. Driver, in his influential introduction, agrees with this assessment and says, "It strikes the keynote of Ezek.'s prophecies."[3]

One would expect to find a great many monographs and journal articles treating at length the significance of the phrase, given its statistically remarkable usage and its importance as a key to understanding the message of this Major Prophet. Surprisingly, however, this is not the case. With a single exception,[4] the only substantial articles which focus upon the so-called "recognition formula" in Ezekiel have come from Walther Zimmerli and were written approximately fifty years ago.[5]

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[1] Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, ed. Walter Brueggemann, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 30.

[2] Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel, A Commentary*, trans. Cosslett Quin, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 15. The German original is *Der Prophet Hezekiel*, 2 vols., Das Alte Testament Deutsch 22/1-2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959-66).

[3] S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* ninth ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 295.

[4] John Strong, "Ezekiel's Use of the Recognition Formula in His Oracles against the Nations," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22 (1995): 115-33. As will be discussed in chapter two of this study, even Strong's article does not have a singular focus upon the recognition formula.

[5] There are three essays of some length by Zimmerli which have direct bearing upon the topic of this dissertation. All three are helpfully collected in *Gottes Offenbarung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament*, Theologische Bücherei 19 (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1963). The articles are also translated into English for a monograph entitled, *I Am Yahweh* (previously cited): "I Am Yahweh," [pp. 1-28] = "Ich bin Jahwe," *Geschichte und Altes Testament* (Festschrift Albrecht Alt), 179-209, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie 16 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953); "Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," [pp. 29-98] = *Erkenntnis Gottes nach dem Buche Ezechiel*, Abhandlung zur Theologie des

Many volumes on the Old Testament prophets (e.g., Newsome, Peckham) and in the field of Old Testament Introduction (e.g., Young, Eissfeldt)[6] fail even to mention the phrase. Others quote the phrase or mention the formula in passing and offer no helpful discussion at all.[7] Fewer discuss the subject, but only in a cursory and ancillary fashion, and in almost every case these discussions are heavily dependent on Zimmerli's work. These weaknesses in the scholarship point to the need for further work in this crucial area of Ezekiel studies.

The scholarly neglect of the formula is all the more surprising in light of the explosion of interest in Ezekiel over the last twenty years. Though many large scale commentaries have recently been published,[8] including the appearance in English translation of Zimmerli's massive work for Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament,[9] though Ezekiel seminar groups

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Alten und Neuen Testaments 27 (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1954); "The Word of Divine Self-manifestation (Proof-Saying): A Prophetic Genré," [pp. 99-110] = "Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises (Erweiswort), eine prophetische Gattung," *Mélanges Bibliques rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert*, 154-64, Travaux de l'institut catholique de Paris 4 (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1957).

[6] James D. Newsome, Jr., *The Hebrew Prophets* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984); Brian Peckham, *History & Prophecy*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1993); E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949); Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. Peter Ackroyd (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965); Otto Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. John Sturdy (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975).

[7] Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948); Samuel Sandmel, *The Hebrew Scriptures: An Introduction to Their Literature and Religious Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, third edition, trans. John Bowden, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989); Werner H. Schmidt, *Old Testament Introduction*, second edition, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: de Gruyter; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999); Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003); John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

[8] Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, AB 22 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983); idem, *Ezekiel 21–37*, AB 22A (New York: Doubleday, 1997); Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel*, FOTL 19 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC 29 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990); idem, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC 28 (Dallas: Word Books, 1994); Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel), Kapitel 1–19*, ATD (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); idem, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel), Kapitel 20–48*, ATD (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); idem, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, "The Book of Ezekiel" in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 6: 1073-1607 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001).

[9] Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); idem, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, trans. James D. Martin, ed. Paul D. Hanson, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). [Hereafter *Ezekiel 1*, *Ezekiel 2*.]

have been established in organizations like SBL and whole congresses devoted to Ezekiel studies,[10] though doctoral dissertations on this once neglected prophet are multiplying, the recognition formula has not received the attention it is due. It is the hope of this Ezekiel student that, just as Zimmerli's research alerted OT scholarship to the significance of the recognition formula and prompted some good discussion of the refrain in days gone by, this dissertation may contribute to a renewed discussion of the refrain among interpreters of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible.

A. Reasons for Undertaking this Study

Past scholarly neglect may be a compelling reason to undertake this exegetical and theological study, but there are additional reasons to pursue the research of the formula at this time. (1) In order to build wisely, one must test the foundation which has previously been laid. Up to this time, there has not been available a more thorough and comprehensive review of past scholarship on the refrain. This study will attempt to fill this lacuna in Ezekiel scholarship, on the way to providing a fresh research of the recognition formula.

(2) Ezekiel scholars today have a keen interest in *theological* analysis, as well as in newer hermeneutical approaches, anthropology, ethics, metaphor, and gender studies. This judgment is based in part upon the name chosen in 1996 for a new SBL symposium which has met annually since 1997: "Seminar on Theological Perspectives on the Book of Ezekiel."[11] While the towering theological importance of the recognition formula should be beyond dispute among Ezekiel scholars, this dissertation will still seek to substantiate the claim that a failure to wrestle seriously with the "keynote" formula is a failure to grapple

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These are translations of *Ezechiel*, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament XIII/1-2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969/1979). [Hereafter *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1 and *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/2].

[10] Among those worthy of mention are the Old Testament section of the 35th Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense (1985), and the 1998 Congress of the Old Testament Society of South Africa.

[11] A portion of the seminar's work is published in two volumes: *The Book of Ezekiel, Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, eds., Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, SBLSymS 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); and *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, eds., Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton, SBLSymS 31 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

with the theology of Ezekiel's prophecy. Consequently, a failure to understand the formula and its theological import is a failure to understand the theological testimony of Ezekiel.

(3) Another reason for attempting a new research of the refrain is the growing dissatisfaction with Zimmerli's older form-critical approach. More generally, of course, *Formgeschichte* has gone into decline with regard to usage and importance.[12] But, more specifically here, Zimmerli's own form criticism has been challenged. Over the last twenty years, as Ezekiel studies have become something of a "growth industry," scholars have called into question both Zimmerli's practice of the form-critical method and the suitability of Ezekiel's prophecy for this type of investigation.

Ellen Davis, in her acclaimed Yale dissertation, argues that Zimmerli has subtly turned aside from a classic form critical methodology and "cannot answer the form critic's fundamental question about how these speeches functioned in their original oral settings. Instead of trying to coordinate the speech forms with social practice . . . he traces their development through a purely literary process."[13] Could it be that this change in critical method is necessary because Ezekiel's oracles are "fundamentally literary" in character? Is there perhaps the tacit acceptance that the search for substantial amounts of pre-literary oral material in Ezekiel has to a great extent been frustrated?[14] This dissertation will return to these questions later with further explanation of the criticisms leveled at Zimmerli and an exploration of possible refinements of form criticism for the study of Ezekiel's recognition formula. Clearly, more work is necessary.

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[12] For a weighty discussion of what ails the form critical enterprise and of potential remedies, see Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi, eds., *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). The repudiation of older-style *Formgeschichte* is expressed by some contributors in blunt terms; veteran form-critic Antony Campbell says the exegetical method "has a future—if its past is allowed a decent burial" ("Form Criticism's Future," 31).

[13] Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy*, JSOTSup 78 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 16.

[14] Perhaps nowhere in Ezekiel scholarship is this stated as strongly as in Davis: "the very thing for which we lack evidence is the fundamental stratum of orally conceived preaching" (*Swallowing the Scroll*, 17).

(4) Yet another justification for undertaking this study is the contemporary shift from diachronic, historical-critical methods to synchronic or "holistic" methods.[15] Already in 1986, at the Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament held in Jerusalem, Rolf Rendtorff said that

> . . . there is much discussion about a "change of paradigm". Certainly, the paradigm within which Old Testament scholarship has worked for more than a century, namely the old German *Literarkritik*, has lost its general acceptance. It is no longer possible to maintain that serious Old Testament scholarship has to be indispensably tied to this set of methodological principles. So far there is no alternative concept that has been generally accepted. According to Thomas Kuhn, one could say that there are different models used by certain groups of scholars, but none of them has won general acceptance. Old Testament scholarship now is in a stage of transition, and we cannot know whether there will be a new paradigm or if the near future will be characterized by a plurality of approaches and methods.[16]

Moshe Greenberg's commentary on Ezekiel 1–20, published the same year as the English translation of Zimmerli's second volume in BKAT, has exerted wide influence among Ezekiel specialists—especially in the English-speaking world[17]—as an encouragement to use the method of "holistic interpretation." He urges scholars to treat the final form of the text. One need only consult the recent commentaries of Block and Darr to recognize that a sea-change has taken place in Ezekiel studies since the 1960s and the publication of Eichrodt in ATD and Zimmerli's BKAT.[18] While it is true that some seek to stem the tide

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[15] For an early evaluation of the upheaval experienced in the field of Old Testament studies, with special focus upon the prophets, see John F. A. Sawyer, "A Change of Emphasis in the Study of the Prophets," in *Israel's Prophetic Tradition: Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd*, eds. Richard Coggins, Anthony Phillips, and Michael Knibb, 233-49 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[16] Rolf Rendtorff, "Between Historical Criticism and Holistic Interpretation: New Trends in Old Testament Exegesis," in *Congress Volume, Jerusalem 1986*, ed. J. A. Emerton, 298-303 (Leiden: Brill, 1988). Cf. Rendtorff, "The Paradigm Is Changing: Hopes—and Fears," *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993): 34-53.

[17] Greenberg's influence among German-speakers is likely to grow through the translation of his commentary (previously cited) for inclusion in the widely used series, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament: *Ezechiel*, HTKAT (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2001-).

[18] Daniel I. Block writes , "No scholar has had greater influence on my understanding of and approach to the book than Professor Greenberg" (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, xiii). Darr, likewise, builds upon Greenberg in focusing primarily upon the text as it stands, rather than upon a complex compositional history. She adds, however, a reader-oriented method which seeks "a late exilic reader's construal (understanding) of the book. . . . [M]y reader does not bring to the text knowledge of the historical-critical methodologies developed especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and of their goals." Darr, "The Book of Ezekiel," *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 6, 1094.

and encourage a renewed and more radical diachrony (i.e., certain German redaction critics), that number appears to be shrinking. This dissertation argues that newer synchronic hermeneutical approaches hold great promise for finding meaning in the refrain. Among the methods with such potential might be intertextuality, socio-rhetorical interpretation,[19] speech-act theory,[20] and discourse analysis.

(5) It would be inaccurate to say that Greenberg has entirely rejected or bracketed diachronic concerns. As he pursues a more conservative "final form" approach to Ezekiel, convinced of what Ellen Davis terms "the text's synchronic intelligibility,"[21] he shows a keen interest in Ezekiel's indebtedness as a priest to the traditions and Scriptures of his

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[19] Here we have in mind both the more liberal (Vernon K. Robbins) and the more conservative (Ben Witherington, David de Silva) schemes of interpretation which operate under the banner "socio-rhetorical." See Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996); and *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996). Especially appreciated is Robbins' plea that there be an enriching conversation among the various disciplines collected within the model (literary/narrative analysis, sociology, rhetorical analysis, post-modern intertextuality, and ideological/theological criticism). His interdisciplinary model—which blends author-centered, text-centered, and reader-response approaches—is attractive.

[20] Speech-act theory was developed initially by the Oxford University professor, J. L. Austin. His two most foundational works are probably *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961); and *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965). The theory was further developed in J. R. Searle, *Speech-Acts: an Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); idem, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); idem, *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Leicester: Apollos, 2002); and Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Continuum/T. & T. Clark, 2001). Excellent work has already been done in speech-act theory on the theological locus of Revelation, which of course is raised in the study of the recognition formula. See Dale Patrick, *The Rhetoric of Revelation in the Hebrew Bible*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999). I agree with those who believe that speech-act theory should be applied more widely in biblical studies and that the approach is best suited to studying smaller, discrete units of text such as "formulae," sentences, and dialogue (cf. James W. Watts, review of *The Rhetoric of Revelation in the Hebrew Bible*, by Dale Patrick, *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24.1 [2002]: 129-31). A representative interpretation of the Old Testament using speech-acts is Walter Houston, "What Did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament," *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993): 167-88, reprinted in *The Place Is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Research*, ed. Robert P. Gordon, 133-53 (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995). Additionally, see *Semeia 41: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Criticism*, ed. Hugh C. White (1988).

[21] Ellen Frances Davis, "Swallowing Hard: Reflections on Ezekiel's Dumbness," in *Signs and Wonders: Biblical Texts in Literary Focus*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum, SBL Semeia Studies Series (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 219.

people.[22] He takes pains to discover and elucidate the prophet's allusions to, and interpretation of, those traditions and Scriptures. Greenberg employs a type of inner-biblical interpretation, which is more diachronic in nature, and his work shows the benefits of that method. He is one of the many who, in the words of Brevard Childs, detect in Ezekiel's theological message "many signs of being influenced by a study of Israel's sacred writings."[23] If one follows Greenberg's lead, inner-biblical interpretation or inner-biblical exegesis should be used as tool in studying the recognition formula.

(6) The combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches,[24] though difficult to accomplish, is a reason for this study and a goal of this dissertation. Exactly at that intersection will the greatest insight be gained and the richest, most dynamic exegesis carried out. Additionally, the synchronic may serve as a control on the deficiencies or excesses of the diachronic, increasing the value of the latter. The reverse is also true: the diachronic may act as a check on the deficiencies or excesses of the synchronic, improving that synchronic approach. The aim here is to prove the wisdom of H. G. M. Williamson's observation, "The task of the interpreter is a struggle between the diachronic and the synchronic."[25] The question of balancing, merging, and/or separating the two must occupy our attention.

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[22] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 395.

[23] Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 364.

[24] The terminology, synchronic and diachronic, and the distinction made between them goes back to Ferdinand de Saussure, and his posthumously published *Cours de linguistique générale*, eds. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (Paris: Payot, 1916), which was translated as *Course in General Linguistics*, eds. C. Bally and A. Sechehaye, trans. Wade Baskin (London: Owen, 1959). A retranslation with annotation was done more recently by Roy Harris (London: G. Duckworth, 1983). For a critique of the ways Saussure's famous distinction has heen (mis)applied to biblical studies, see Ferdinand E. Deist, "On 'Synchronic' and 'Diachronic': Wie es eigentlich gewesen," *JNSL* 21.1 (1995): 37-48.

[25] H. G. M. Williamson, review of *Isaiah*, by Brevard Childs, *Theology Today* 59.1 (2002): 124. One Ezekiel scholar who has published his thoughts on resolving the tension between the two is Paul M. Joyce, "Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives on Ezekiel," in *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, 115-28 (Leiden: Brill, 1995). Joyce reminds us (127) that Saussure himself placed the two in opposition, just as many contemporary biblical scholars are accustomed to doing, and Saussure strongly discouraged such a "combination" of diachrony and synchrony. Joyce rejects the assertions of the Swiss philosopher, where he said, "The contrast between the two points of view—synchronic and diachronic—is absolute and admits no compromise. . . . In studying a language from either point of view, it is of the utmost importance to assign each fact to its appropriate sphere, and not to confuse the two methods." (Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 83, 98.)

What would a "balancing" look like, for example? Should one approach, say, the diachronic, be viewed as "foundational" or be given a "first among equals" status?

(7) The relationship between the law and the prophets has long been a prime concern of Ezekiel students. There are both theological and literary components to that relationship which deserve careful attention. We note in passing that Zimmerli himself interrupted his Ezekiel project to address this relationship.[26] Building upon the writings of Yehezkel Kaufmann and Avi Hurvitz, several recent Ezekiel dissertations have researched the *literary* relation between Ezekiel and Pentateuchal materials/sources—especially P—and concluded that the prophecy is later than P and bears marks of being influenced by P. Worth mentioning in this respect are Mark Rooker and Risa Levitt Kohn.[27] Their arguments and proposals deserve further exploration and testing, and the recognition formula provides a suitably restricted field for a manageable test.

(8) It is often remarked that Ezekiel's language and rhetorical habits are repetitious or stereotyped. For example, the vulgar characterization of idols as גלולים, literally "dung pellets," occurs nearly 40 times. Also, Ezekiel's oracles are regularly introduced (over 50 times) by the formulaic ויהי דבר־יהוה אלי לאמר, "and the word of Yahweh came to me saying."[28] Probably the best known of all the repetitions in Ezekiel would be Yahweh's address to the prophet as בן־אדם, "son of man" (93 times). Why does the prophecy use a rhetorical strategy which, according to the testimony of some modern readers, may hinder clear communication and engender frustration? A more thorough and up-to-date research of

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[26] See *The Law and the Prophets: A Study of the Meaning of the Old Testament*, trans. R. E. Clements (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965).

[27] Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*, JSOTSup 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah*, JSOTSup 358 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002). The latter of these two was reviewed by this student in *OTE* 16.2 (2003): 538-40. It is worth noting that Wellhausen himself partially based his argument, that Ezekiel's played a transitional role from prophets to law, upon his linguistic studies into the historical development of the Hebrew language (*Prolegomena*, 385-91). These very same questions are still being vigorously discussed by Ezekiel scholars today.

[28] One of the more complete listings of Ezekiel's frequently used terms and formulae is found in Driver's Introduction (previously cited).

this repetitious recognition formula provides an occasion to discuss and illuminate Ezekiel's purposes in employing phrases and motifs in that repetitious manner.

(9) Another reason for undertaking this research would be the current lack of a systematic study of the relationships among the recognition formulae in Ezekiel. Alongside better-known intertextuality, the literary critic today may ask questions about inner-textuality (or intra-textuality), the mutual relationships of texts within one corpus.[29] In seeking to interpret the formulae, one should look within the prophecy as well as outside it and evaluate possible interplay between formulae. How are the formulae to be heard together, as well as separately? Might Ezekiel's prophecy be something of an echo-chamber,[30] with attendant harmonies, dissonance, confusion or amplification? How do the echoes work? Because no scholarship has been discovered thus far which treats the inter-relationships of the formulae, research is necessary. If a switch in metaphors may be permitted, one could say that a fallow field may prove fertile.

(10) A final reason for this study is this student's perception that in recent scholarship less attention has been paid to the question of Ezekiel's source for the recognition formula. More particularly, there is need to address the question of the relationship between the

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[29] Examples of previous studies which ask such questions are: Willem A. M. Beuken, "Servant and Herald of Good Tidings: Isaiah 61 as an Interpretation of Isaiah 40–55," in *The Book of Isaiah, Le livre d'Isaïa: Les oracles et leurs relectures: Unité et complexité de l'ouvrage*, ed. J. Vermeylen, 411-42, BETL 81 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989); idem, "Jesaja 33 als Spiegeltext im Jesajabuch," *ETL* 67 (1991): 5-55; and J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "The Intertextual Relationship between Isa 11,6-9 and Isa 65,25," in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in Honour of A. S. Van Der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, eds. F. García Martínez, A. Hilhorst, C. J. Labuschangne, 31-42, VTSup 49 (Leiden: Brill, 1992). Without using inter- or intra-textuality labels, other studies have engaged in close readings "between" similar texts in one prophetic book. See Ronald E. Clements, "Beyond Tradition-History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah's Themes," in *Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 78-92; H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); idem, "Isaiah 6,13 and 1,29-31," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken*, eds. J. van Ruiten, M. Vervenne, 119-28, BETL 132 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997); and idem, "Isaiah 62:4 and the Problem of Inner-Biblical Allusions," *JBL* 119.4 (2000): 734-39.

[30] The metaphor of "echo" appears to be first used, and most elaborately used, in intertextual studies by John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981). Worth noting is that Hollander does not describe his approach as intertextuality. Biblical scholars are attracted to the terminology; see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); idem, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

prophet's recognition formula and the Exodus Scriptural "traditions" as a potential source or intertext.

In many, many respects there is now the need and opportunity for Ezekiel scholarship to attempt a new research of the recognition formulae and to break new ground. In this day, when the "assured results" of past scholarship no longer appear so assured, older hermeneutical models require reassessment along with their conclusions, and newer methods should be explored in a complementary fashion.

B. The Thesis and Plan of this Study

1. The Research Problem, Thesis, And Methodology Proposed

This study is concerned with the central question, what is the literary and theological function of the recognition formula in the book of Ezekiel? In pursuing this question or research problem, this study will discuss Ezekiel's keynote formula with reference to the literary and theological relationship between the law and the prophets. In particular, this dissertation will argue the thesis that the seventy-odd recognition formulae in Ezekiel mark a theological nexus and "intertextuality" between the prophecy and the book of Exodus, and those formulae are best interpreted alongside the numerous recognition formulae in Exodus. Interpreted intertextually, Ezekiel's formula points readers of the oracles to know Yahweh as the God of the Exodus, who still acts, in covenant, to judge and to deliver. (Here the term "intertextuality" is used in a broad sense, even including the phenomenon of "inner-biblical interpretation.")[31] That intertextuality may be construed in two ways. First of all, in more diachronic fashion, it may be an intertextuality of production, in which a text can only be written in relationship to other texts. The interpreter who so construes the intertextuality will likely speak of sources, vectors of influence, authorial intention or rhetorical strategy.

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[31] Michael Fishbane regards his own approach to "inner-biblical interpretation/exegesis" as dove-tailing with "intertextuality." See the discussion of methodology in chapter one.

Secondly, according to a more synchronic reading of texts, it may be an intertextuality of reception,[32] in which a text can be read only in relationship to other texts.

With regard to proposed methodology, the approach of inner-biblical interpretation is well suited for exploring the text-production angle of intertextuality and the questions which emerge concerning the (prophet's or redactor's) reading, re-use and "re-presentation" (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of Exodus Scriptural "traditions" in the prophecy of Ezekiel.[33] Also appropriate is a more synchronic intertextual approach which asks how the Exodus and Ezekiel texts—in particular the recognition formulae—may be read together today from the text-reception angle, while bracketing most diachronic concerns. Both approaches together will provide the means for researching and answering the question posed in the research problem: what is the literary and theological function of the recognition formula in the book of Ezekiel? Both approaches used together reveal a large number of parallels between Ezekiel and Exodus and indicate how well the recognition formulae may be read alongside one another. Methodological questions are discussed more fully at the conclusion of chapter one.

2. An Outline Of The Study

With a proposal that Ezekiel's prophecy signals a dependence upon earlier Scriptures, as the Childs quote above suggests (footnote 23), one immediately runs into critical debate over the compositional history of the Pentateuch and the age of the literary deposit of Pentateuchal "traditions." Since the time of Wellhausen, Ezekiel has been considered a figure marking a transition in the religion of Old Testament Israel, and the prophet's indebtedness to prophetic and priestly traditions and his literary relationship to Pentateuchal materials (e.g., Holiness Code) have been matters of debate. The first chapter outlines the

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[32] The nomenclature, "intertextuality of text production," and "intertextuality of text reception," is borrowed from Ellen van Wolde, "Texts in Dialogue with Texts: Intertextuality in the Ruth and Tamar Narratives," *Biblical Interpretation* 5.1 (1997): 4.

[33] It is understood that some scholars today might be inclined to read the Pentateuch (in any recensional form) as a product of the Persian era and as possibly reflecting the influence of an exilic Ezekiel, instead of *vice versa.* Evidence which makes this alternative seem unlikely is presented in the first chapter, and also in chapters 2, 4, 5, and 6.

problem of the Law and the Prophets in historical criticism so as to prepare the way for discussing the presuppositions behind this study and strategies in approaching the recognition formula.

Chapter two highlights the contributions of past scholarship and indicates both the points of controversy which may require discussion in this study and points of confusion in the literature (e.g., what is the true number of recognition formulae in Ezekiel?) which may hopefully be cleared away. Additionally, that survey of scholarship will indicate how this study moves beyond work previously done and offers a new perspective on Ezekiel's prophecy. Chapter three presents the results of basic exegetical spadework focused upon the keynote formula. It catalogues the occurrences of the formula and collects the details of its usage in Ezekiel. Because this study is concerned with intertextuality, chapter three also contains an appendix which lists all the recognition formulae (and related phrases) in the Old Testament; this provides interpreters opportunity to compare and contrast the recognition formula and related phrases in different biblical books.

Chapter four examines the many parallels between Exodus and Ezekiel and argues that the evidence supports the central thesis of this study, that a "demonstrable relationship between texts"[34] does exist, and that the recognition formula is a marker of an intertextual relation. From a diachronic text-production angle, the evidence points to a repetition and (sometimes radical) transformation of Exodus texts and traditions in Ezekiel's oracles. The recognition formula fits into this pattern. The present study will query specifically how Ezekiel's oracles take up the recognition formula, as an earlier text, to "re-use," "re-contextualize," "extend," "reformulate," re-interpret," or "transform" it for an exilic readership/audience.[35]

It was Gerhard von Rad's insight that the proper interpretation of a prophecy lies at the intersection of three lines: older theological tradition, the social and political situation of the

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[34] Ellen van Wolde, "Texts in Dialogue with Texts: Intertextuality in the Ruth and Tamar Narratives, *Biblical Interpretation* 5.1 (1997): 4.

[35] The scope of this study must be limited. Unfortunately, a deep probing of each of the more general parallels of event, theme, and terminology, according to inner-biblical interpretation (in order to discover the exegetical function of the repetition), is not feasible in this dissertation.

prophet, and a new revelatory word from Yahweh.[36] Whereas chapter four explores the first in this triad, older theological "tradition" (now based in a text), chapter five of this study seeks to do justice to the second, the socio-historical and religious context into which Ezekiel's oracles (with their recognition formulae) were spoken. Research in this area points to two features of Ezekiel's theology which play in his use of the keynote formula. They are, first of all, a distinguishing between the Jewish community in exile and those remaining in Judah, and, secondly, the defilement of the whole nation of Israel which had never given up the idols of Egypt.

Chapter six offers an interpretation of the formula, answering the question posed in the research problem, and emphasizing that there is both theological disjunction and conjunction between the recognition formulae in Exodus and Ezekiel. From the standpoint of diachronic analysis, one could instead speak of "theological discontinuity and continuity" in Ezekiel's re-use of the formula. Chapter seven summarizes the argument of this study, draws several major theological conclusions, and suggests a few areas open to additional research.

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[36] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II:130, cited by Gene M. Tucker, "Prophecy and the Prophetic Literature," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press ; Decatur, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1985), 328, 332.

CHAPTER 1
THE LAW & PROPHETS IN HISTORICAL CRITICISM, AND STRATEGIES FOR APPROACHING THE FORMULA

Walther Zimmerli's work on *The Law and the Prophets* should not be regarded as some diversion from his assigned task of interpreting Ezekiel for BKAT. That monograph, slim though it is, took up a huge issue, which is of both perennial and paramount importance for the study of individual prophetic books and for understanding the whole Old Testament. An Ezekiel scholar might even be so bold as to suggest that the relationship between the law and the prophets is more central for Ezekiel studies than for scholarship on the other prophets. It will prove to be an overriding issue in this present research of the recognition formula.

A. The Law and the Prophets in Historical Criticism

> . . . Let us, then, by prophets . . . understand, first of all, eminent interpreters of Scripture, and farther, persons who are endowed with no common wisdom and dexterity in taking a right view of the present necessity of the Church, that they may speak suitably to it, and in this way be, in a manner, ambassadors to communicate the divine will.[1]

Calvin's comment, which may properly be applied to both the Old and New Testament prophets, typifies the traditional Christian understanding of both the nature of divine prophecy and the relation of the law and the prophets. According to this so-called "pre-critical" view, the prophets were primarily interpreters of the law who applied the truths of

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[1] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians,* vol. 1, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 reprint) 415. Similar statements regarding the prophets' office as interpreters of Scripture can be found in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), I.vi.2, and IV.viii.8.

the Scriptures to their contemporaries.[2] The Pentateuch, as God's prior self-revelation, was their key source for understanding Israel's origins, history, society as a nation, and religion. The written Torah was the basis of the prophets' knowledge of Yahweh and of his will for the covenant people.

It hardly needs to be said that the traditional view above was discarded long ago within the circle of mainline critical scholarship. Arguing that the Five Books of Moses merely purport to have come from the hand of the great law-giver and to provide an eye-witness account of the nation's history in pre-settlement times, the critic denies the literary integrity of the Pentateuch and attempts to reconstruct the history and religious development of Israel. Douglas Knight well explains the perspective of the critic,

> . . . Historical criticism has argued persuasively that most of these details stem not from the pre-settlement period as they purport to do, but instead are projected from later centuries back into the ancestral and Mosaic times. Thus the Pentateuch, which ends with the death of Moses . . . serves actually as a major source for our reconstruction of the cultural and religious life of the people from that point all the way down to the fifth century.[3]

According to commonly held critical theory, the Pentateuch is not the interpretive key *par excellence* which opens up the whole of the Old Testament. Rather, the Torah must be seen as a later development, at least in its "final form." Gunneweg speaks of this as one of

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[2] Judaism has traditionally held this view as well. The seventh of Maimonides' "Thirteen Fundamental Doctrines of the Jewish Religion" reads, "I believe with perfect faith, that the prophecy of Moscheh, our teacher peace be with him, has been true, and that he has been the father of all prophets as well of the precedent as of the following prophets." סדור תהלות ישראל *with English Translation* (Jerusalem: n.d.), 159. According to the ancient Rabbi Samuel (*circa* 250 A.D.) in the Babylonian Talmud, the prophets after Moses have not got the right to innovate in any way, but must stick to the Torah. See *The Talmud of Babylonia, Temurah*, 16A (Jacob Neusner, ed., *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary*, XXXIII: Temurah, South Florida Academic Commentary Series, No. 10 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994], 84), cited by Meyer in *TDNT*, vol. 6: 817, s.v. προφητης. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (*circa* 250 A.D.), according to Rudolf Meyer, taught that "Moses spoke already all the words of the prophets and everything later derives from the prophecy of Moses." See Exodus/Shemot Rabba, 42.8, on Exod. 32:7 (cited in *TDNT*, vol. 6: 817, s.v. προφητης). For a recent exponent of these traditional beliefs, see Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, ed. and trans. Gordon Tucker with Leonard Levin (New York: Continuum, 2005), 587. He wrote, "[W]hatever a prophet was destined to prophesy was already uttered by Moses. The prophets were nothing but attendants to Moses, and they said nothing that they did not hear from others, in the name of Moses. It is as if inspiration is not the root of the prophetic utterance, but rather immersion in the teaching of Moses."

[3] Douglas A. Knight, "The Pentateuch," *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress; Decatur, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1985), 264.

the many fruits of historical-critical study: ". . . the rediscovery of the fact that the law became predominant at a relatively late stage and that it is therefore *only of relative theological importance*."[4] It has not been uncommon for critical scholars to view the prophets, in contrast to those who penned the legal traditions recorded in the law, as being the truly original theologians of Israel and Judah. It was the prophets who were responsible for creating, almost *de novo,* Israel's historical perspective as the people of God, the nation's social ethics, and an all encompassing religious world view with Yahweh at its center. Rather than their preaching being based on long-standing covenant traditions (oral or written),[5] the prophets themselves more or less originated those covenantal ideals which later came to be expressed and systematized in the "Five Books of Moses."

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[4] A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Understanding the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 123-4. Emphasis added.

[5] There has been long, vigorous debate on the issue of the antiquity and significance of ברית or "covenant." It is well known that Wellhausen greatly influenced subsequent generations of scholars with his arguments for a late date around Elijah's time (*Prolegomena*, 417-18). Yet, while Wellhausen's date came to be assumed by most scholars (especially in the English-speaking circle of scholarship), there was always a significant contingent of men who argued for an earlier dating of the covenant institution. Names like Kittel, Steuernagel, Procksch and Gressmann stand out. It can be said, therefore, that developments in the 1930s which largely overthrew the Wellhausen position on this issue were not unanticipated. When Mowinckel and especially Eichrodt argued convincingly for an early date, the groundwork had to some extent already been laid. When the argument for the antiquity and even the centrality of the covenant was bolstered by archaeological evidence of second and even third millennia covenants (note particularly the work of Baltzer and Mendenhall) it appeared that scholarship might be approaching basic consensus. It now seems, however, that Old Testament scholarship has intentions of not only coming full circle and revitalizing Wellhausen's view, but of pushing the date much later. Perlitt's work, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament,* published in 1969, has been heralded by many as a devastating critique of the early date position. For example, Douglas Knight states that "the antiquity of covenantal theology has been persuasively discounted by Lothar Perlitt" ("Pentateuch," 268). Perlitt's conclusion is that the *mature* OT doctrine of the covenant can be dated to the late sixth century. This student disagrees strongly with Perlitt and believes that the OT covenant theme can be traced to the time of much earlier Hittite treaties; here he follows Moshe Weinfeld, "Covenant Making in Anatolia and Mesopotamia," *JANES* 22 (1993): 135-39. A selection of influential works on covenant in the OT should include: George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955); Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, AnBib 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963, new edition 1978); Delbert R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses and the Old Testament Prophets*, Biblica et Orientalia 16 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964); Klaus Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular*, 2nd rev. ed., WMANT 4 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964); idem, *The Covenant Formulary*, trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969); Lothar Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, WMANT 36 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969); Moshe Weinfeld, "ברית" in *TDOT*, vol. 2: 253-79; E. W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Robert A. Oden, Jr., "The Place of Covenant in the Religion of Israel," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, eds. Patrick D. Miller, Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride, 429-47 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and*

The question naturally arises, why did this massive hermeneutical paradigm shift come about? Many scholars have suggested that the "theological problem of Old Testament legalism" was a primary force pushing forward this radical re-interpretation. Finding fault with a perceived legalism in the Old Testament, many theologians came to believe that, not only could both testaments not be placed on the same level, the Old Testament must be discounted in the formulation of a truly Christian theology. Much of the Old Testament seemed to present a "lower religion" which, to modern sensibilities, needed to be set free from sacrificial ritual and other material elements, and re-established on a purely spiritual basis. Spirit must triumph over "letter." Not law, but freedom from all that trammels the human spirit is the goal of history.[6] In the nineteenth century the Christian dialectic of law and gospel was applied in such a way that the Old Testament religion as a whole, not just the legislation, was regarded with suspicion as legalistic in essence. Some, like F. D. E. Schleiermacher, would go so far as to reject the Old Testament and warn Christians against its seductive influence.[7] It is difficult today to imagine the extent of "the problem" for those who wrestled with this Lutheran crux more than a century ago. German idealism,[8] the

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Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); Menachem Haran, "The *Berit* 'Covenant': Its Nature and Ceremonial Background," in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, eds. Mordechai Cogan, Barry L. Eichler, Jeffrey H. Tigay (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 203-19; Rolf Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*, Old Testament Studies (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); and Steven L. McKenzie, *Covenant* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000).

[6] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel wrote, "Universal history exhibits the gradation in the development of that principle whose substantial purport is the consciousness of freedom." *The Philosophy of History*, 179, in *The Philosophy of Right/The Philosophy of History* (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1952).

[7] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (*Christlicher Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhang dargestellt*, 2. Auflage, 1830), trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), §132. Rudolf Bultmann expressed a similarly dismissive attitude toward the Old Testament in the twentieth century: "The events which meant something for Israel, which were God's Word, mean nothing more to us." ("The Significance of the Old Testament for Christian Faith," in *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*, ed. Bernard W. Anderson [New York: Harper & Row, 1963], 31.)

[8] There was developing a clear-cut dichotomy in historical criticism between what the critic calls "Israel's picture of her past" (i.e., the faith picture) and "what actually happened." Zimmerli wrote, "This divorce . . . of an intellectual 'doctrine' from its irrational historical 'superstructure'" was "influenced ultimately by idealist thought." See "The History of Israelite Religion," in *Tradition and Interpretation: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 362.

romanticism of their age, which found the more severe themes of judgment in the Old Testament repugnant, and the dialectics of Hegelian philosophy only served to put a sharper edge on the problem. A movement was afoot which regarded the Old Testament faith as not merely pre-Christian, but opposed to the spirit of Christianity. Adolf von Harnack gave expression to the views of many when, in praise of Schleiermacher's "defense of the gospel," he wrote,

> Die These, die im folgenden begründet werden soll, lautet: das AT im 2. Jahrhundert zu verwerfen, war ein Fehler, den die große Kirche mit Recht abgelehnt hat; es im 16. Jahrhundert beizubehalten, war ein Schicksal, dem sich die Reformation noch nicht zu entziehen vermochte; es aber seit dem 19. Jahrhundert als kanonische Urkunde im Protestantismus noch zu conservieren, ist die Folge einer religiösen und kirchlichen Lähmung.[9]

1. Literary Criticism And Wellhausenism

Besides the rejection of the Old Testament as the "document of an alien religion," there were other attempts at resolving the crux. K. H. Graf, and Julius Wellhausen after him, dealt with the theological problem by means of literary criticism. It dawned on them that a different perspective on the law and the prophets would yield a completely different reading of the Old Testament. Their hypothesis that the law stood at the end of the history of Israel's religion, rather than at the beginning, revolutionized scholarly views on the development of Israel's faith. The creatively original faith of the prophets, they argued, preceded a long period of decline into a moribund, legalistic religion which eventuated in the Pharisaism Jesus and Paul confronted and roundly condemned. The Pentateuch is to be shifted to the "Jewish periphery of the canon." Wellhausen explains his excitement about

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[9] Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion. Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott. Eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1921), 248-9. One can point to numbers of nineteenth century men who viewed Old Testament religion as not just incompatible with Christianity but the absolute antithesis of the New Testament faith. G. W. F. Hegel spoke of the God of Israel as a demon of hate. This is Marcionism revisited, especially if one remembers how certain New Testament scholars of the era engaged in passage-clipping to purge the Christian scriptures of any Jewish, legalistic taint (Baur's Tübingen School). "The agreement between Marcion and the Tübingen school is considerable," according to Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, trans. John E. Steely and Lyle D. Bierma (Durham, North Carolina: The Labyrinth Press, 1990), 175.

this new historical approach in his seminal work, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (1883, ET 1885):

> We cannot, then, peremptorily refuse to regard it as possible that what was the law of Judaism may also have been its product; and there are urgent reasons for taking the suggestion into very careful consideration. It may not be out of place here to refer to personal experience. In my early student days I was attracted to the stories of Saul and David, Ahab and Elijah; the discourses of Amos and Isaiah laid strong hold on me, and I read myself well into the prophetic and historical books of the Old Testament. Thanks to such aids as were accessible to me, I even considered that I understood them tolerably, but at the same time was troubled with a bad conscience, as if I were beginning with the roof instead of the foundation; for I had no thorough acquaintance with the Law, of which I was accustomed to be told that it was the basis and postulate of the whole literature. At last I took courage and made my way through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers . . . Yet so far from attaining clear conceptions, I only fell into deeper confusion. . . . At last, in the course of a casual visit in Göttingen in the summer of 1867, I learned through Ritschl that Karl Heinrich Graf placed the Law later than the Prophets, and, almost without knowing his reasons for the hypothesis, I was prepared to accept it; I readily acknowledged to myself the possibility of understanding Hebrew antiquity without the book of the Torah.[10]

Wellhausen was convinced that the law was not the starting point for ancient Israel, but for Judaism. With zeal, scholarship on the continent, in England, and in America took up this revisionist thesis and, in many scholars' own minds at least, quickly laid the traditional view to rest. No one, however, could have predicted the great amount of work needed to work out the implications of the Graf/Wellhausen synthesis, after it had displaced the wide spectrum of earlier critical theories on the composition of the Pentateuch.[11] Doubtless, many scholars of that time anticipated that the confusing historical data would neatly fall into place as the new hermeneutical key was rigorously applied, but their early, confident

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[10] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel,* preface by W. Robertson Smith (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885; Reprinted with foreword by Douglas A. Knight, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 3-4. The German original was *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (1883), the second edition of the earlier work, *Geschichte Israels* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1878).

[11] For a thorough review of the development of Pentateuchal criticism and most all its competing theories, see the combination of John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* JSOTSup 53 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); Albert de Pury, ed., *Le Pentateuque en Question: Les origines et la composition des cinq premiers livres de la Bible à la lumière des recherches récentes* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1989); Cornelis Houtman, *Der Pentateuch: Die Geschichte seiner Erforschung neben einer Auswertung*, Biblical Exegesis and Theology 9 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994); Ernest Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and Gordon J. Wenham, "Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, eds. David W. Baker, Bill T. Arnold, 116-44 (Grand Rapids: Baker; Leicester: Apollos, 1999).

statements now seem quite naive. Meinhold's assertion is representative: "One can completely understand the prophets without the law, but not the law without the prophets."[12]

The results of late nineteenth century source critical analysis of the Pentateuch are well known.[13] Wellhausen hypothesized that in the Five Books of Moses one can discern four distinct source documents: "J" or the Yahwist source dates from *circa* 850 B.C., "E" or the Elohist dates from *circa* 700, "D" or Deuteronomy is dated *circa* 623, "P" or the Priestly source dates from 500-450. The whole Pentateuch "became known in the year 444 and was unknown till then."[14]

It is important to note that the scalpel of literary criticism was applied to the prophetic literature as well as to the Pentateuch. Literary criticism differentiated between "authentic" material attributed to the prophet and the "inauthentic" which had its source elsewhere. Taking the criticism of Ezekiel as an example, one can recognize how radical the results of the methodology could be. Out of the total 1273 verses of Ezekiel's prophecy, Hölscher found less than 145 to be authentic. Much later Garscha would go even further as he employed redaction criticism, saying that only 34 verses come from Ezekiel's hand.[15] (One

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[12] Johannes Meinhold, *Einführung in das Alte Testament* (Gießen: A. Töpelmann, 1919). Cited by Gene M. Tucker, "Prophecy and the Prophetic Literature," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press ; Decatur, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1985), 327.

[13] European source criticism earlier in the nineteenth century looked very different from Wellhausen's proposals. Douglas A. Knight writes in his "Foreword" to Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* (ix), "Until Wellhausen, the scholarly consensus held that there were at least four primary sources and . . . they were to be ordered beginning with the Priestly . . . PEJD." Julius Wellhausen built especially upon the mid-nineteenth century theses of Graf (the prophets were earlier than the law) and Kuenen (P was post-exilic). Besides the "Foreword" of Douglas Knight, there are other fine evaluations of Wellhausen's legacy: Ronald E. Clements, *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); John R. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (previously cited); John Barton, "Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Israel:* Influences and Effects," in *Text & Experience: Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible*, ed. Daniel Smith-Christopher, 316-29 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

[14] Wellhausen, 408.

[15] Gustav Hölscher, *Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch* (Gießen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1924); Jörg Garscha, *Studien zum Ezechielbuch: eine redaktionskritische Untersuchung von 1-39*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 23 (Bern: Herbert Lang; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1974). When one considers Garscha's radical conclusions (i.e., nothing but 17:2-10 and 23:2-25 belong to Ezekiel the prophet), the date of his Marburg dissertation (post-Zimmerli) is especially noteworthy.

of today's standard German commentaries, Pohlmann,[16] also allows Ezekiel only a very few verses.) C. C. Torrey made a name for himself in Ezekiel scholarship by stridently arguing that the authenticity of the prophecy as a whole is to be rejected and that it is rightly interpreted as a pseudepigraph from the third century.[17]

In historical criticism, not only was Ezekiel's prophecy dismembered, the prophet Ezekiel was also disparaged because of his priestly heritage and priestly theological mindset. As historical criticism tended to mark a deep divide—some would speak of "antithesis"—between priest and prophet,[18] Ezekiel was reckoned by certain scholars as living on the wrong side of the divide. Wellhausen spoke of him unflatteringly as "the priest in prophet's mantle."[19]

> We may call Jeremiah the last of the prophets; those who came after him were prophets only in name. Ezekiel had swallowed a book (iii. 1-3), and gave it out again. He also, like Zechariah, calls the pre-exilic prophets the old prophets, conscious that he himself belongs to the epigoni; he meditates on their words like Daniel and comments on them in his own prophecy (xxxviii. 17, xxxix. 8).[20]

When one reads all that the influential Wellhausen wrote about Ezekiel in *Prolegomena*, it comes as little surprise that that prophecy was neglected, relative to Isaiah and Jeremiah, in critical scholarship over the following fifty years.

The true prophets' experience, to Wellhausen's way of thinking, was to receive revelation from Yahweh that was at once personal, individual, intuitive, and immediate.[21]

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[16] Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel* (previously cited).

[17] C. C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930). This important work is discussed further in chapter two. Resurrecting Torrey's view are: J. Becker, "Erwägungen zur ezechielischen Frage," in *Künder des Wortes*, eds. Lothar Ruppert, Peter Weimar, and Erich Zenger, 137-49 (Würzburg: Echter, 1982); and Udo Feist, *Ezechiel: Das literarische Problem des Buches forschungsgeschichtlich betrachtet*, BWANT 138 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1995), the last of these brought to my attention by Andrew Mein.

[18] This is true particularly of the latter OT period. "There is no fixed distinction in early times between the two offices," says Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*, 397).

[19] Ibid., 59.

[20] Ibid., 403.

[21] Oddly enough, the ancient Israelite prophets know Romanticism's "virtues" of individualism (self-expression), spontaneity, primitivism, originality, imagination.

They were not bookish like Ezekiel the Priest. Indeed, their proclamation was characterized by "free impulse" and can be sharply contrasted with Ezekiel's ways.

> They [the prophets] do not preach on set texts; they speak out of the spirit which judges all things and itself is judged by no man. Where do they ever lean on any other authority than the truth of what they say; where do they rest on any other foundation than their own certainty?[22]

It is a mistake to believe that the prophets were "the expounders of Moses." Wellhausen wrote that "their creed is not to be found in any book. It is barbarism, in dealing with such a phenomenon [prophecy] to distort its physiognomy by introducing the law. It is a vain imagination to suppose that the prophets expounded and applied the law."[23]

How did Wellhausen interpret the remarkable links between the book of Ezekiel and the Priestly Code of the Pentateuch, for example, texts in Leviticus? He argued that there was literary borrowing, but in the opposite direction from what scholars had always assumed. Taking Leviticus 26 as a main text for discussion, Wellhausen argued that it bore an "Ezekielic colouring," together with preceding chapters.[24] Ezekiel has priority, and Leviticus builds upon the foundation laid by Ezekiel. As he moved to matters of detail, Wellhausen wrote, "the phrase *pine away in their iniquity* is repeated by Ezekiel as he heard it in the mouth of the people. He is its originator in literature; in Lev. xxvi it is borrowed."[25]

In his summary of Ezekiel's place in the development of Israel's religion, Wellhausen asserts that his role was pivotal.

> Ezekiel . . . is the connecting link between the prophets and the law. He claims to be a prophet, and starts from prophetic ideas; but they are not his own ideas, they are those of his predecessors which he turns into dogmas. He is by nature a priest, and his particular merit is that he enclosed the soul of prophecy in the body of a community which was not political, but founded on the temple and the cultus.[26]

Wellhausen was confident and insistent in arguing his thesis that the law follows the prophets. Later scholarship, however, would find it necessary to backtrack some distance

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[22] Ibid., 398.

[23] Ibid., 399.

[24] Ibid., 381.

[25] Ibid., 384.

[26] Ibid., 421.

from the Wellhausen position and would begin, again, to speak of the prophets expounding the law.

2. FORM CRITICISM

Although radical literary criticism and the reconstruction of Israel's history dominated Old Testament studies including the interpretation of the prophetic literature for some time, "[b]y the middle of the twentieth century scholars were agreed that, when the so-called classical prophets began to emerge in the eighth century B.C.E., *many if not most of the narrative and legal traditions that constitute the Pentateuch already had taken shape.*"[27] Scholars could recognize old traditions and old laws which were common both to the prophetic writings and also to the books of the Law. The Pentateuch allegedly contained much late material ("P"), but also pointed to many older traditions from which the prophets drew. For example, the form-critical work of Alt, Jepsen, and others demonstrated the antiquity of law.[28] Scholarship continued to devote its attention to the Pentateuch—from Herman Gunkel's *Genesis, übersetzt und erklärt* to the commentaries and essays of Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth, particularly von Rad's book, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*—because of its value in marking out the complexes of earlier tradition. Von Rad could say, "As we now see, they [the prophets] were in greater or lesser degree conditioned by old traditions which they re-interpreted and applied to their own times."[29] Materials in the Pentateuch are of great importance in interpreting the prophets since they reflect ancient traditions which informed the prophetic preaching. This

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[27] Tucker, 327. Emphasis added.

[28] Alfred Jepsen, *Untersuchung zum Bundesbuch*, BWANT series 3, vol. 5 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1927); Albrecht Alt, *Die Ursprünge des Israelitischen Rechts*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse 86.1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934), translated as "The Origins of Israelite Law," in Alt's collected *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966). Other less important Alt essays on the topic are published in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Band I (München: C. H. Beck'sche, 1953).

[29] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* Vol. II: *The Theology of Israel's Prophetic Traditions*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 4.

understanding of the law and the prophets is some distance removed from Wellhausen's "view that the completed Pentateuch was the outcome and not the presupposition of the prophetic teaching."[30]

Von Rad's statement points to the change which came in the advent of form criticism with regard to the type of questions scholars were asking. This newer method of study that first came to the fore in the work of Gunkel and Gressmann did not ignore the earlier source critical studies—in fact, they assumed source critical methods and conclusions in the way they went about their work—but it reoriented scholarship drastically.[31] Because it undermined the "remarkable synthesis of literary analysis and historical reconstruction" which obtained in the late nineteenth century, form criticism has been termed, not only "a modification," but "a revolt against Wellhausenism."[32] Wellhausen's work of literary criticism had tried to outline the history of the Bible's composition almost solely in terms of written sources and the editorial reworking of the documents. That source criticism had attempted to tell the story of large literary units and the general history of their production: Which verses may be ascribed to "J"? When was the Yahwist document written?

By von Rad's time the discipline of form criticism—the German, *Formgeschichte,* points to the historical orientation of this discipline too—was well established. The form critics dealt with the pre-literary phase of the history of the Bible's composition. The old traditions and beliefs had surely been passed down orally over the generations, and the form critics found evidence of this in a wide variety of fixed "forms" suited to and reflective of

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[30] G. W. Anderson, "Hebrew Religion," in *The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 283.

[31] This is probably truer of studies in the prophets than of Pentateuchal scholarship. The Graf/ Wellhausen hypothesis regarding the four documents ". . . has for most scholars continued to represent the base point of Pentateuchal criticism" (Knight, "Pentateuch," 275). Nicholson (*The Pentateuch*, vi) agrees, as he seeks to defend the older *Literarkritik:* "The work of Wellhausen, for all that it needs revision and development in detail, remains the securest basis for understanding the Pentateuch." But a different evaluation must be given of Wellhausen's grand thesis regarding the development of prophecy. Hans-Joachim Kraus concludes, "Daß die Propheten nicht im Sinne der Erklärungen Wellhausens als evolutionischer Aufbruch eines neuen Ethos zu verstehen sind, sondern daß sie vom altisraelitischen Recht und seiner Verkündigung herkommen." (*Die prophetische Verkündigung des Rechts in Israel*, Theologische Studien 51 [Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1957], 29. Cited by Tucker, 331.)

[32] Anderson, "Hebrew Religion," 283.

oral communication (blessings, curses, oaths, hymns, laments, parables, etc.). The newer scholarship paid special attention to these primary, smaller units of speech which were put into writing and through a complex process were included in the Bible. Particularly, the critics were interested in the history and function of the forms used to communicate the old traditions: Who first used a given form? What circumstances (usually the phrase, *Sitz im Leben,* is employed) may have contributed to its development and continued usage? What was its function (the intended purpose of its use and its actual effect) in the life of the community of faith?

Scholars discovered a much greater "freedom" employing form criticism than they knew in the older source critical method because the new method was more open-ended. The answers to the form-critical questions about the elusive pre-literary stage were incredibly diverse, defying scholarly consensus. Disagreements had been fierce before, when scholars dealt with the text in front of them. With the advent of form criticism, which attempts to reach behind the text and explain not only its allegedly fragmentary literary beginnings but also the development and shaping of traditions during the stage of oral transmission, scholarship became even more divided. Research often became extremely subjective guesswork[33] involving hypothetical reconstructions. Usually the arguable reconstructions were based on research in such areas as liturgy in the Old Testament cultus, ancient and modern folklore studies, comparative religions, and sociology. As one looks at form criticism, the presuppositions of the discipline are apparent: the meaning of the form is determined by its context (*Sitz im Leben*) and function in the life of the community[34] as much as by its content.

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[33] One New Testament professor candidly admits the difficulty of the endeavor: "A study of the early oral stages of a literature known to us only in a later written form sounds like an impossibility!" Edgar V. McKnight, *What Is Form Criticism?* Guides to Biblical Scholarship: New Testament Series, ed. Dan O. Via, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 10.

[34] The stress on community is an important one in contemporary biblical studies. Books on the sociological aspects of Israel's religion, in the view of some reviewers, have heralded a new direction for scholarship as it moves into the twenty-first century. See Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism*, eds. and trans. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952); Robert R. Wilson, *Sociology and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); idem, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); idem, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); Norman Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated*

3. TRADITIO-HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Form criticism claimed to have great insight into the way Israel's faith was passed down, and that method has perhaps been *the* major tool used by Old Testament scholarship to understand the biblical text over the last eighty years. In the 1920s and 1930s so much form-critical research was being done on the various "complexes of tradition" (Patriarchs, election, Sinai, Exodus/conquest, Davidic promise) that a whole new discipline,[35] tradition criticism (*Überlieferungsgeschichte*), was spawned.

> Just as Wellhausen and the documentary critics had regarded the succession of the documents J, E, D, P as material for the reconstruction of the religious history of the later, *literate* period, so this new generation of scholars regarded their traditio-historical conclusions as material for reconstructing the religion and history of the Israelite tribes in the *pre-literate* period, a period about which very little direct evidence was available.[36]

The traditio-historical method is notable for its insistence that oral tradition,[37] with its ability to preserve and transform verbal materials over centuries until they were "reduced"

Israel 1250-1050 B.C.E. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979); idem, ed., *Semeia 37: Social Scientific Criticism of the Hebrew Bible and Its Social World* (1986); R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); D. L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Thomas W. Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy: The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989); A. D. H. Mayes, *The Old Testament in Sociological Perspective* (London: Pickering, 1989); Victor H. Matthews, and Don C. Benjamin, *Social World of Ancient Israel, 1250-587 BCE* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1993); Charles E. Carter, and Carol L. Meyers, eds., *Community, Identity, and Ideology: Social Science Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, vol. 6 (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1996); Charles E. Carter, "Opening Windows onto Biblical Worlds: Applying the Social Sciences to Hebrew Scripture," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, eds. David W. Baker, and Bill T. Arnold, 421-51 (Grand Rapids: Baker; Leicester: Apollos, 1999); and J. David Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

[35] Because the traditio-historical method is so interconnected with form criticism as generally practiced, and because "tradition criticism" as a term has been used so often without a precise definition, some may prefer to view this "new discipline" as a subset within the discipline of form criticism. Though we must mention Gerhard von Rad and Albrecht Alt, it was Martin Noth's work which more than any other signaled this development of a new method: *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1943); *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1948); *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, trans. and intro. by Bernard W. Anderson (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981). Whybray says that Noth "pushed the use of the new method to its extreme limits" (*The Making of the Pentateuch*, 135).

[36] Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch*, 135. Emphasis his.

[37] There are oft cited quotations regarding the primacy of oral tradition for the traditio-historical approach in H. S. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift 6 (Uppsala:

to writing,[38] best explains the development of the Old Testament corpus. The focus upon orality in transmission has been much more pronounced than in form criticism. Tradition history critics have tended to be antagonistic toward the claims of literary critics (this is especially true of the Scandinavians); they say it is necessary that we Bible interpreters "free ourselves from the modern, anachronistic book-view," which is utterly foreign to ancient Near Eastern cultural realities.[39] Our modern, Occidental misunderstanding of that ancient oral culture is in evidence especially in the Documentary Hypothesis. Have any in critical circles ever been as bold as Engnell in denouncing the old approach?

> Does it really stand to reason that the typically time-bound literary criticism of the Wellhausen type and its obviously anachronistic method should be raised to everlasting dignity or endowed with eternal life? . . . First I would like to state then, that the break with the literary-critical method must be radical; no compromise is possible. The old method must be replaced by a new one. And the only possible alternative is, as far as I can see, what is in Scandinavia called the traditio-historical method.[40]

Eduard Nielsen, in his work on *Oral Tradition*, showed how the premises of tradition history, especially its emphasis upon the role of oral tradition, undermine the source-critical enterprise, with its customary chronology of "documents." But there is another casualty to be considered; tradition history collapses Wellhausen's "dogma" of the evolution of

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Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1935); and Eduard Nielsen, *Oral Tradition: A Modern Problem in Old Testament Interpretation*, Studies in Biblical Theology (London: SCM, 1954). Nyberg writes (p. 7), "Transmission in the East is seldom exclusively written; it is chiefly *oral* in character. The living speech plays in the East from ancient times to the present a greater role than the written presentation. Almost every written work in the Orient went through a longer or shorter oral transmission in its earliest history, and also even after it is written down the oral transmission remains the normal form in the preservation and use of the work." (The citation and translation come from Bruce K. Waltke, "Oral Tradition," in *A Tribute to Gleason Archer*, eds. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Ronald F. Youngblood [Chicago: Moody Press, 1986], 17.)

[38] Among many traditio-historical researchers there is a negative attitude toward reducing the traditions to writing, but some take a more balanced viewpoint. Helmer Ringgren urged, "oral and written transmission should not be played off against [one] another: they do not exclude each other, but may be regarded as complementary"; see "Oral and Written Transmission in the O.T.," *Studia Theologica* 3.1 (1949): 34. Ringgren's article as a whole has a more conciliatory tone, and it would be more acceptable to German tradition history specialists, who have not been so dismissive of literary criticism. Cf. Engnell.

[39] Ivan Engnell, "The Traditio-Historical Method in Old Testament Research," in *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. John T. Willis (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 3.

[40] Ivan Engnell, "Methodological Aspects of Old Testament Study," in *Congress Volume, Oxford 1959*, VTSup VII (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 21. Of course such statements provoked a reaction; see G. W. Anderson, "Some Aspects of the Uppsala School of Old Testament Study," *HTR* 43 (1950): 239-56.

"ethical monotheism" in ancient Israel, a theological reconstruction which is based upon source criticism.

> If one admits that a written source, the literary age of which is three or four hundred years younger than that of another, contains features that are considerably older than the recension of the oldest written source, then one presupposes—as Gunkel does, too—that these written sources are the reduction to writing of century-old traditions, where the time of the reduction to writing in reality says nothing as to the age of the material, but at most something about its last revision. This is a very fruitful point of view, but at the same time it deprives literary criticism of one of its favourite criteria. For according to this view it is impossible as a matter of course to divide the *material* into three age groups and to distribute the three groups among J, E and P. For here indeed the youngest source has an element which is older than the present form of the oldest source. External criteria, such as the criterion of the name of the Deity and the stylistic criteria, remain, but in that case source criticism indisputably loses its charm, the charm which it possessed when literary critics were fully convinced that source distinction clarified the development of the Israelite religion in the times of the monarchy and the exile.[41]

This perspective on Pentateuchal traditions cannot help but promote a re-evaluation of the prophets' indebtedness to those traditions.

Another revolutionary aspect of the traditio-historical method, hinted at in the Nielsen quote above, is its dispute with Wellhausenism over the antiquity and the value of the cultic traditions in the Pentateuch. Professor Engnell of Uppsala found evidence of very old cultic traditions and wrote against an "anti-cultic" prejudice he found in many Old Testament scholars.[42] Such prejudice, that cultic materials and sacral law must be placed late in the devolution—not evolution—of the OT religion, has too long blinded scholarship from seeing the long-standing traditions behind the Law of Moses and from recognizing the prophets' true relationship to ancient cultic traditions.[43]

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[41] Nielsen, *Oral Tradition*, 96-7.

[42] In his essay, "Prophets and Prophetism," published in *A Rigid Scrutiny* (137), Engnell wrote: "Exegetes have unanimously placed strong emphasis on ethics as perhaps the most important factor which distinguishes 'genuine' prophetism from 'false' prophetism, which very indiscriminately is regarded as lacking ethical character and is characterized by its association with the cult. . . . According to this view, the prophets . . . come forth with an essentially anti-cultic proclamation. Their message is that righteousness should supplant the cult. As a result, the prophets create a new 'spiritual' form of religion which is 'without cult'. This understanding which is still predominant (at any rate, in popular expositions and text-books), is undoubtedly prompted by a Protestant tenet that cultic piety is of inferior power, a view inherited from the Age of Enlightenment and Rationalism. Advocates of this position operate on a purely anachronistic assumption that the prophets propagated a 'spiritual' religion which was independent of the cult. But, in reality, this is completely foreign to ancient Israel, including her prophets."

[43] The relationship among the different classes of intelligentsia (priests, prophets, scribes, wise men, etc.) is a close one according to Sigmund Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom," *Wisdom in Israel and in the*

Traditio-historical research on the prophetic corpus has primarily dealt with two issues: the prophets' use and combination of traditional theological themes—some of them Pentateuchal traditions—and, secondly, the growth and development of oral tradition as a part of what would later become the compositional history of the prophetic literature. The method commonly runs down the following track: (1) the discovery of oral tradition's units and complexes and their separation as distinct strands or their mixture (often hypothetical); (2) the reframing and application of tradition in its transmission through the prophet's proclamation; (3) the collection and selection of a prophet's "traditional" preaching; (4) committing those sayings to writing, possibly together with secondary accretions; and (5) various redactions of the traditional content (comparing the formulation of a tradition in one place/text with its formulation in another).[44]

It is the contention of the tradition critics that over many generations the prophetic sayings ("units") and complexes were passed down by many lips/hands. This could occur with devotion and supererogatory care to preserve the exact wording, or there could be a thorough reworking of material so as to "actualize" the teaching for a new audience or situation.[45] Because this is the case, some have maintained that distinguishing between the "layers" and finding the materials which go back to the prophet himself is nearly impossible. Eissfeldt quotes a particularly strong statement from H. S. Nyberg—a leading representative, along with Mowinckel and Engnell, of the Scandinavian school of tradition history—as an example of scholarly skepticism on this point:

Ancient Near East, Presented to Professor Harold Henry Rowley, eds. Martin Noth, D. Winton Thomas, 205-24, VTSup 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1955), especially p. 206.

[44] Tradition history not infrequently brackets out any consideration of later written compositional stages. Zimmerli, however, takes the later stages into account; see for example "Das Gotteswort des Ezechiel," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 48 (1951): 249-62.

[45] Excellent discussions of actualization and re-actualization are contained in Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, SBLDS 9 (Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973); Joseph W. Groves, *Actualization and Interpretation in the Old Testament*, SBLDS 86 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); and Brevard S. Childs, "Retrospective Reading of the Old Testament Prophets," *ZAW* 108 (1996): 362-77. An early proposal for understanding the OT phenomenon is Martin Noth, "Die Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments in die Verkündigung," *Evangelische Theologie* 12 (1952-3): 6-17, translated as "The 'Re-Presentation' of the Old Testament in Proclamation," in *Essays on Old Testament Interpretation*, ed. Claus Westermann, trans. James Luther Mays, 76-88 (London: SCM, 1963).

> The written O.T. is a creation of the Jewish community after the Exile; what preceded it was certainly only in small measure in fixed written form. . . . Only with the greatest reserve can we reckon . . . with writers among the prophets. . . . We must reckon with circles, sometimes centres, of tradition, that preserved and handed on the material. It is self-evident that such a process of transmission could not continue without some change in the material handed on, but we have to do, not with textual corruption, but with active transformation. . . . For the rest, O.T. scholarship would do well to consider earnestly what possibility it can ever have of regaining the *ipsissima verba* of Old Testament personalities. We have nothing but the tradition of their sayings.[46]

This Nyberg quote suggests that, according to some of the more radical Scandinavian tradition historians at least, we should despair of repairing a text such as Ezekiel or discerning authentic oracles, once rigorous traditio-historical research has done its work and the biblical text has been "fractured into a historical succession of messages"[47] and traditions.

4. Redaction Criticism

Some today see things differently and are confident of their ability to disentangle the authentic and the inauthentic. They view their traditio-historical and redaction-critical studies as yielding "assured results" (*anerkannte Ergebnisse*) and are unafraid to make bold assertions regarding which material is authentic and which is not. One could cite, as an example of a principle governing today's confident redaction criticism, the rather skeptical statement of S. Herrmann to which Otto Kaiser gives assent in his Old Testament

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[46] H. S. Nyberg, *Studien zum Hoseabuche*, 8ff. Cited in Otto Eissfeldt, "The Prophetic Literature," *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951) 128-29. This statement reflects the extremes one may find in the writings of the Scandinavian school in the mid-twentieth century. Few today would express themselves in this way concerning the literary abilities of the prophets. Yet Nyberg's more positive view of accretions—not textual corruption but active transformation—is also worth noting. One finds in Zimmerli's writings too, not a dismissive attitude, but a profound interest in the so-called theological intentionality of accumulated sayings which, while not original, were deemed worthy of the esteemed prophet. Zimmerli termed this gradual augmenting and updating of original oracles *Fortschreibung*. Ezekiel's circle of disciples, or his "school," thus made an important contribution to the final form of the prophecy. The contribution made in "extending" the oracles should not be viewed in a negative light nor dismissed as secondary material, said Zimmerli. See "Die Phänomen der 'Fortschreibung' im Buche Ezechiel," in *Prophecy: Essays presented to Georg Fohrer*, ed. J. A. Emerton, 174-91, BZAW 150 (Berlin: deGruyter, 1980). We note the similarities between *Fortschreibung* and re-actualization (discussed in the previous footnote).

[47] The phrase comes from Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 70.

introduction: "It is highly probable that in the present book of Ezekiel nothing has been preserved which can be regarded as an expectation of salvation on the part of the exiled prophet."[48]

Professor Kaiser is the key figure in the radically critical circle of Ezekiel scholars because many of them were his students at Marburg: Hermann Schulz, Jörg Garscha, and Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann. In their complex schemes of redactional layering or stratification,[49] they show the influence of Wellhausen's grand theory of the evolution of Israel's religion. What principles may be used to distinguish the authentic material—if there is any—from the inauthentic; how might we separate the earlier from the later in Ezekiel? Pohlmann and Garscha judge the more artful/poetic sections (parables) to be more prophetic in character and therefore early.[50] But the more priestly "sacral law" layer is very late (*circa* 300 B.C.), says Garscha. Prophets antedate the law, and the two must be kept separate. What bears the marks of oral communication (riddles and parables again) is more likely prophetic and early; whatever seems studied or literary is priestly and late. The recognition formulae and other repetitious features of Ezekiel's prophecy are discounted and relegated to the later strata. It seems that the identity of Ezekiel as a priest-prophet completely disappears in some radical German scholarship; is this because such a mixture of offices or roles is unthinkable?

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[48] Siegfried Herrmann, *Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament*, BWANT 85, 5.5. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965), 290. Cited by Kaiser, *Introduction*, 257.

[49] Garscha claims to have discovered about eight different layers in the redactional history of the book. The recognition formula is supposedly from a later stratum (early fourth century): "Die Erkenntnisformel muß vielmehr in erster Linie als Kennzeichen der deuteroezechielischen Schicht angesehen werden." (*Studien zum Ezechielbuch*, 313-14).

[50] This is in line with Kaiser's dictum that "prophetic utterance as being divine utterance had to be made in exalted language . . ." This fact "assists in distinguishing between sayings of the prophets that were really uttered, and literary additions in the prophetic books." (Otto Kaiser, *Introduction*, 212). This widely held notion of prophecy, as properly issuing forth only in heightened language, is reflected in many literary works, e.g., Robert Bridges' "Prometheus the Firegiver" (1883), lines 433-5, in *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges, Excluding the Eight Dramas*, second ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1936):

> He may be mad and yet say true—maybe
> The heat of prophecy like a strong wine
> Shameth his reason with exultant speech.

Within the scholarship produced by the Marburg school there is a markedly negative attitude toward biblical texts which are more literary in style or which seem to have an affinity with and dependence upon other texts or recorded traditions. Ezekiel the scholar, with his regular prophetic *Rückblick* to the "traditions" of Israel's founding, cannot be expected to fare well with these scholars as Kaiser asserts that

> It can be demonstrated that the dependence of the prophets on tradition increases as the living force of prophecy flags, and finally gives way to scribalism and apocalyptic speculation, or falls into contempt (cf. Zech. 13.1 ff.).[51]

This postulate predisposes the reader of Ezekiel's prophecy to judge it deficient and, unlike the "pure stream" of prophecy in the OT period, unoriginal. It would seem that Kaiser's approach precludes any favorable consideration of the exilic prophet's theological relationship to the law or legal traditions.

All the discussion among scholars of "the stream of developing tradition" with its multiple redactional layers from different periods points to, first of all, a very dynamic and, secondly, a confusing compositional history. In the critical view of tradition and the *dynamic* process of its growth, "[l]iterary materials could not only be remembered but also could be actually created at the oral stage. A tradition could thereby emerge as an expression of anything that was important to the ongoing life of the community."[52] These traditions, just like the whole corpus of received Scripture which lay at the end of the long process of development, were the product of the ever-changing community of faith.[53] The theories of traditio-historical and redaction criticism, it can be said, also presuppose a *confusing* compositional history. The modern interpreter, according to this discipline, faces all sorts of bewildering questions about the role and intentions of redactors who reworked the basic material (*Grundtext*) and added their own materials. Tradition critics take these

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[51] Kaiser, *Introduction*, 215.

[52] Knight, "Pentateuch," 272.

[53] Some scholars are careful to avoid this kind of wording and, instead, present a dialectic which gives greater weight to the influence of Scripture. Childs posits that "the usual historical critical Introduction has failed to relate the nature of the literature correctly to the community which treasured it as scripture. It is constitutive of Israel's history that the literature formed the identity of the religious community which in turn shaped the literature." Childs, *Introduction*, 41.

questions very seriously. For example, many have devoted years to researching the *Nachgeschichte* of prophetic forms. This term, originally used by Hertzberg and Zimmerli, refers to the phenomenon of early forms being reused at a later time in a new context with perhaps a different function and meaning.[54]

Examining the whole period of text formation, tradition criticism and redaction criticism hold as one of their basic hermeneutical assumptions that "the meaning(s) or intentions which a given text had at its origin *and* during its subsequent development are relevant for our understanding of the text in its present form."[55] Keeping in mind this assumption and the deep division among redaction critical scholars over even the most basic questions about the origins and compositional history of biblical texts (both the Pentateuch and the Prophets), it appears unlikely that the redaction critical camp will ever arrive at a consensus understanding of the text in its present form. And were the scholars of the Marburg school to reach some agreement amongst themselves, they would almost certainly be unable to convince other scholars around the world of the validity of their reconstruction of the compositional history.[56] Wide divergencies in OT scholarship would still be an overriding problem.

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[54] Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, "Die Nachgeschichte alttestamentlicher Texte innerhalb des Alten Testaments," in *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments*, eds. Paul Volz, Friedrich Stummer, Johannes Hempel, 110-21, BZAW 66 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1936). Zimmerli was present at the Göttingen conference when Hertzberg presented his essay ("Vorbemerkung," V). Sometimes Zimmerli will use a similar word, "*Nachinterpretation*," to refer to the reuse and reinterpretation of previous materials. The best review of Zimmerli's work in this area would be the Yale dissertation of Pamela D. J. Scalise entitled, "From Prophet's Word to Prophetic Book: A Study of Walther Zimmerli's Theory of 'Nachinterpretation' " (1982).

[55] Knight, "Pentateuch," 265.

[56] Even within Germany there has long been strong resistance to the Marburg approach. Over twenty years ago Hans Joachim-Kraus clearly stated his opinion of the more radical *Redaktionskritik:* "Angesichts der durch W. Zimmerli klar dargelegten Methodik tritt die extreme Situation, in welche die *verabsolutierte Redaktionskritik* hineingeraten ist, besonders kraß in Ersheinung. Vgl. J. Garscha, Studien zum Ezechielbuch. Eine redaktionskritische Untersuchung von 1–39 (1974). Die herkömmlichen Grundsätze der Interpretation werden auf den Kopf gestellt." (*Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments*, 3. Auflage [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982], 545-46). Cf. Georg Fohrer's review of Garscha's work in *ZAW* 87 (1975): 396; and the evaluation of Garscha's methodology in Walther Zimmerli's Preface to the Second Edition (1979) of his BKAT.

Ezekiel scholarship, generally speaking, long ago shifted away from the narrowly historical-critical program of Germans such as Kaiser and Pohlmann; this is apparent in the methodological assumptions of many important dissertations published over the last twenty years.[57] The resistance of scholars to that program is based in part, of course, upon shifts in philosophical hermeneutics.[58] However, there is also a strong conviction that the biblical text itself, Ezekiel's prophecy, resists disassembly. Needless to say, the late twentieth century's shift from historical concerns to literary ones continues on into this new millennium.

5. CANONICAL CRITICISM

There has recently been a movement underway to read the Old Testament with a greater sensitivity to the traditional picture of ancient Israel and the development of her literature

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[57] Davis summarized the approach of her 1987 Yale dissertation as follows: "The elegant architecture of the book grows more impressive with further study. Our investigations must be conducted with regard for the literary integrity of the text at every level, beginning with the earliest stages of composition. We are likely to render satisfactory interpretations only by proceeding on the assumption that the text was always intelligible in its synchronic dimensions, however its meanings may have been enriched and changed through diachronic evolution. It is wise to credit those who produced the text with the concern that it should be read." (Ellen F. Davis, "Swallowing Hard," 235.) Compare the similar approach of Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *The Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48*, SBLDS 154 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), especially 125ff. To Davis we may now add as well the methodological remarks of John Kutsko in his 1997 Harvard dissertation, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel*, Biblical and Judaic Studies 7 (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 9: "Despite the lack of consensus on the form, unity, or redaction of the book of Ezekiel, scholars generally recognize that the book needs to be treated as a literary whole. Even when redaction is conspicuous, most passages resist precise divisions and classifications. Identifiable literary themes and recurrent phraseology suggest that approaching Ezekiel as a well-integrated, coherent text is warranted."

[58] The background and explanation of this shift are far too complex to be adequately treated here. We can only point to the importance of a few such thinkers as (1) Saussure, who taught that "a linguistic study is first and foremost one of *la langue*, that is, of the conventional relations obtaining at a given time between signs belonging to the same system, rather than one of the development of linguistic forms over time" (David Holdcroft, "Saussure, Ferdinand de," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 8, ed. Edward Craig [London: Routledge, 1998], 479); (2) Wimsatt-Beardsley, who gave impetus to the New Criticism (or formalism) by attacking the "intentional fallacy," the hermeneutical priority of authorial intent (William K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1954]); and (3) Mikhail M. Bakhtin, whose theories of "language as dialogic" and polyphony promoted the development of intertextuality and reader-response approaches (*The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson, Michael Holquist [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981]). For astute appraisals of the swirling currents in philosophical hermeneutics, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); and the recent volumes in "The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series," beginning with *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, eds. Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene, and Karl Möller, The Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, vol. 1 (Carlisle: Paternoster; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

which is presented by the Old Testament itself. In a canonical focus, the tradition of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch has enormous theological ramifications for reading the entire Old Testament canon.[59] Jumping to the topic of prophecy, there is unquestionably a biblical tradition of the prophets building upon a Mosaic foundation and viewing themselves as Moses' heirs. Practitioners of canonical criticism have shown great interest, therefore, in the topic of the law and the prophets, as interrelated revelatory traditions and interrelated literary corpora.[60] Among those using a canonical approach and among literary critics today reading the final form of the prophets, we find an increasing amount of scholarship which explores prophetic links to Moses and the Pentateuch.[61] (Ezekiel's prophecy figures prominently in this area.)[62] Did certain prophets understand themselves as fulfilling the role

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[59] Brevard Childs has famously argued that higher critics and conservatives have been so fixated upon issues of historicity—either denying or seeking to bolster the historical value of the text—that both camps have failed to do "justice to the canonical understanding of Moses' relationship to the Pentateuch." There is need to interpret the Pentateuch and assess its function more as a unit. Once that is done, it will be clearer that the Pentateuch provides the foundation for the OT canon. In the Pentateuch, "The fundamental theological understanding of God's redemptive work through law and grace, promise and fulfilment, election and obedience was once and for all established" (*Introduction*, 132). Canonically speaking (p. 134), "The law, which derived from God's speaking to Moses, applies to every successive generation of Israel ([Deut] 31:11-13). It serves as a witness to God's will (v. 28). The law of God has now been transmitted for the future generations in the written form of scripture. . . . Indeed, the original role of Moses as the unique prophet of God (34:10) will be performed by the book of the law in the future (31:26ff.). . . . [I]n spite of the lack of historical evidence by which to trace the actual process, it would seem clear that the authorship of Moses did perform a normative role within a canonical context from a very early period. The laws attributed to Moses were deemed authoritative, and conversely authoritative laws were attributed to Moses."

[60] See for example the Yale dissertation of Stephen B. Chapman, published as *The Law and the Prophets: A Study in Old Testament Canon Formation*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 27 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

[61] Christopher R. Seitz, "The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989): 3-27; R. E. Clements, "Jeremiah 1–25 and the Deuteronomistic History," in *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson*, ed. A. Graeme Auld, 93-113 (esp. 99ff.), JSOTSup 152 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); Martin O'Kane, "Isaiah: A Prophet in the Footsteps of Moses," *JSOT* 69 (1996): 29-51. Two of the earliest articles in modern critical scholarship, cited by Seitz, to research this area were William Holladay, "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22," *JBL* 83 (1964): 153-64; and also "Jeremiah and Moses: Further Observations," *JBL* 85 (1966): 17-27.

[62] H. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" *JSOT* 61 (1994): 97-109; Corrine Patton, "I Myself Gave them Laws that Were Not Good: Ezekiel 20 and the Exodus Traditions," *JSOT* 69 (1996): 73-90; Mark F. Rooker, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Ezekiel," *Faith and Mission* 15.2 (1998): 45-52; and Risa Levitt Kohn, "A Prophet like Moses? Rethinking Ezekiel's Relationship to the Torah," *ZAW* 114 (2002): 236-254. Monographs which suggest the heuristic value of such links are: Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48*, HSM 10 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976); and John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine*

of a "new Moses"? (It is not that they had arrogated to themselves such status or that they had been accorded that status by the community, but that it had been thrust upon them in a sometimes unwelcome call.)[63] What are we to make of the frequent parallels between the stories of the prophets' experiences and those of the Moses figure?

The exegetical method of Childs' canonical approach parts ways with diachronic approaches such as form criticism—while appreciating the valuable contributions made by *Formgeschichte* in the past—when it comes to drawing theological conclusions. He writes,

> To assume that the prophets can be understood only if each oracle is related to a specific historical event or located in its original cultural milieu is to introduce a major hermeneutical confusion into the discipline and to render an understanding of the canonical Scriptures virtually impossible. Rather, the true referent of the biblical witness can only be comprehended from within the biblical literature itself.[64]

Attentiveness to the canonical context will require the interpreter to read the prophets and the law together, despite the fact that historical criticism has discouraged that endeavor with its dichotomy between Israel's "actual history" and "confessed history"—was there ever a historical Moses, an exodus event?—and its scheme of dating compositions which, in certain cases at least, would rule out inner-biblical interpretation. In other words, the biblical

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Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel, Biblical and Judaic Studies 7 (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2000). The latter scholar believes that "some of the traditions that are encountered in their final literary form in the Priestly sources of the Pentateuch were also available to Ezekiel in some form, oral or written" (13), and that "the prophet adapts Priestly traditions" (99). Here we leave aside for the moment the recent literature on inner-biblical interpretation, which has also made a contribution in this area.

[63] An excellent argument is made regarding this point by David W. Baker, "Israelite Prophets and Prophecy," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (previously cited), 270: ". . . The necessity for constant repetitions of the prophetic cry for repentance and return to the covenant, at times by several messengers addressing a single generation, and at other times by prophets challenging subsequent generations, would indicate that these men and women were not, on the whole, recognized by their audience as actual, authoritative messengers from God. Presumably, if society had so recognized them, their message would have been more efficacious. In other words, if prophets are defined by society's recognition of them and their function as noticeably affecting the life and behavior of that society, one would question whether prophets actually existed in ancient Israel, since practical impact was negligible as evidenced by the lack of meaningful, sustained response to their message. That most of those in Israelite society appear not to have recognized prophetic authority as having any practical effect on how they lived leads one to question the sociological emphasis on the role society played in recognizing and legitimating prophetic authority. The prophets regarded their divine commissioning as providing their authority, an authority that was independent of the response of the people to whom they spoke."

[64] Brevard S. Childs, "The Canonical Shape of the Prophetic Literature," *Interpretation* 32.1 (1978): 53.

relationship between the prophets and Moses' law is an intended result of the process of canonical shaping, and it must be reckoned with, if we are to read the Bible as Scripture.

Few big books in Old Testament scholarship have been as widely read and discussed as Childs' *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* and Walter Brueggemann's controversial *Theology of the Old Testament.* Though these two authors have often been sharply at odds, their approaches have many similarities—excepting Christological exegesis of the Old Testament. Brueggemann's conclusions regarding the law and the prophets deserve a quotation, for they reveal, in a carefully nuanced way, how decisively a canonical approach breaks with Wellhausenism.

> In addition to the Levites and these occasional mediators, the great prophets of Israel form a third group of practitioners of Torah mediation. The phenomenon of prophecy is rich and varied and largely ad hoc. The prophets derive from many traditions. In the canonical form of Israel's testimony, however, this disparate material has been largely ordered around themes of judgment and hope, which appear to be derived from Torah claims of blessing and curse. . . . In the Deuteronomic Torah, it is precisely disobedience to Torah that results in the catastrophe of 587 B.C.E., which plunges Israel into the fissure of exile. In canonical form, the prophets are informed by Torah and give accent to its invitation to life and its warning about death.[65]

6. Conclusion

Today there is no discoverable consensus regarding the relationship between the law and the prophets—the two considered either as canonical collections of texts or as theological traditions. The relationship of these traditions has long been "one of the most contentious issues," and "has lost none of its edge" in OT scholarship. Blenkinsopp says that there is one point of agreement among critical scholars: the issue of the relationship "cannot be posed in a straightforward way in terms of relative priority."[66] On the one hand, scholars with diachronic interests dissent from Wellhausen's dictum that the prophets preceded the law. That dictum cannot be sustained; some legal tradition must be counted

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[65] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 588.

[66] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Prophecy and the Prophetic Books," in *Text and Context*, ed. A. D. H. Mayes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 338.

very ancient. On the other hand, the critics claim not to have found much evidence of prophetic indictments being based upon that juridical tradition. Moving away from the historical-critical concern, one must allow for an immensely meaningful theological relationship between the two.

The two traditions are obviously in tension in some ways,[67] and OT scholars have wrestled with describing the tension. Von Rad posited elements of continuity between older legal traditions and the proclamation of the prophets, but he emphasized the discontinuities as the traditions were reinterpreted.[68] Zimmerli followed with his view that "the prophets brought something new, which needed to be added to the law," and which superseded the law in the sense that "what the prophets proclaimed led to an inner crisis in the law."[69]

As this study proceeds, the relationship between the Prophet Ezekiel and the law will repeatedly occupy our attention. There will be exploration of both the continuities and the discontinuities. The tension created in the prophecy between the two will be a creative one, provoked by tragedy and leading to profound theological reflection upon Yahweh's purposes with his people.

B. Strategies for Approaching Ezekiel's Formula

Any informed reader of Old Testament scholarship will realize that a wide variety of interpretive methods and perspectives can be applied to our topic of discussion. Ezekiel's recognition formula will be treated differently by conservative and critical scholarship, by

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[67] This is not to say, perhaps in line with a conventional critical interpretation of Numbers 12:6-7, that the two are in conflict (*contra* Philip J. Budd, *Numbers*, WBC [Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984], 138-9).

[68] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols., trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Brothers/Harper & Row, 1962-5). The continuity is expressed thus: "they are deeply rooted in the religious traditions of their nation; indeed, their whole preaching might almost be described as a unique dialogue with the tradition by means of which the latter was made to speak to their own day" (II. 177). For discontinuity, see especially II. 176-87, and I. 66-8, 96ff. Von Rad said "the devastating force and finality of the prophetic pronouncement of judgment can never have had a cultic antecedent" (II. 179). The dual aspects of continuity and discontinuity, as von Rad defines them, may be the result of the conflicting theologies von Rad finds throughout the Old Testament. See further I. 289-96.

[69] Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets*, 13.

scholars using different approaches among older diachronic methodologies—compare the tradition-history of an Engnell with the redaction criticism of an Otto Kaiser—and by those who have abandoned diachrony for the sake of synchronic methods which are text-centered or reader-centered. This is indeed a difficult, yet fascinating, time for the field of biblical studies as so many conflicting and complementary approaches vie with one another. Various possible approaches to the formula and its interpretation will be briefly set forth and discussed in this section, and the student will outline his multi-perspectival approach.

In the past, much of the scholarship on the refrain has taken a strong interest in the origin of the refrain, and this present study will squarely face that historical critical question. All scholars are agreed that the formula "is by no means an original coinage of Ezekiel himself."[70] Unless one is disposed to believe that Ezekiel's prophecy shows an affinity with, and is distinguishably influenced by, literature outside Israel,[71] the reader of Ezekiel's recognition formula confronts *biblical* influences and "reactualized" biblical traditions or the phenomenon of what Michael Fishbane (and Sarna before him) terms "inner-biblical exegesis" and "inner-biblical interpretation." From where did the prophet derive this

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[70] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 41.

[71] Attempts have been made, judged unsuccessful by this student, to adduce evidence for strong non-biblical and non-Hebrew influence upon the language and structuring of Ezekiel's prophecy. Even more than *influence*, some judge Ezekiel's prophecy to be consciously modelled after non-Hebrew sources. See S. P. Garfinkel, "Studies in Akkadian Influences in the Book of Ezekiel" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1983); Daniel Bodi, "Terminological and Thematic Comparisons between the Book of Ezekiel and Akkadian Literature with Special Reference to the Poem of Erra," (Diss., Union Theological Seminary [New York City], 1987); and Diane M. Sharon, "A Biblical Parallel to a Sumerian Temple Hymn? Ezekiel 40–48 and Gudea," *JANES* 24 (1996): 99-109. Bodi's doctoral work was published as *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, OBO 104 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991). See also Margaret Odell, "Genre and Persona in Ezekiel 24:15-24," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, 195-219. In a later article Odell seeks to answer possible (actual?) criticism of her thesis that Ezekiel's prophecy, including chapter one, achieved its coherence through "a sophisticated appropriation of the three-part Assyrian building inscription genre"; see "Ezekiel Saw What He Saw," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism*, 162). There is no disputing that Ezekiel's prophecy should be read against its ANE background. Such an approach is both necessary and illuminating. E.g., Daniel I. Block, "Divine Abandonment: Ezekiel's Adaptation of an Ancient Near Eastern Motif," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, 15-42. But a general, comprehensive, and conscious dependence of Ezekiel's 48 chapters upon obscure Assyrian, not Babylonian, building inscriptions and an obscure Akkadian poem, almost certainly unknown to Ezekiel's audience early in the exilic period, is an unconvincing proposal. (Note: Bodi makes a case that the recognition formula derives from the Poem of Erra; see "Terminological and Thematic Comparisons," 324ff.)

refrain which dominates his book? Addressing the question of the formula's origin is among the highest priorities for anyone researching Ezekiel's formula and will be a prime concern in this dissertation. There is no denying, however, that a danger lurks here. To be avoided is a narrowly historical focus; one of the complaints about traditional historical criticism is that it often has betrayed an "assumption that genetic origins of a text, often terribly hypothetical, are all one has to discover."[72]

Alongside the diachronic, more synchronic literary methods should be used. As Northrop Frye says, "the end product needs to be examined in its own right."[73] Readers from a variety of backgrounds have found coherence in the book of Ezekiel in its present form; perhaps this is so because there is a coherence to be found and appreciated. There is also justification for examining the theological intentionality of the recognition formula in both its Old Testament canonical context and even broader contexts. Church and Synagogue read Ezekiel within a larger canon so as to appropriate the prophecy's message to today's faith community. It is not only the ancient historical context and (what this college lecturer is accustomed to calling) "the authentic voice of the Old Testament" which deserve consideration. Jon D. Levenson of Harvard University writes,

> I have argued that the price of recovering the *historical* context of sacred books has been the erosion of the largest *literary* contexts that undergird the traditions that claim to be based upon them. . . . Much of the polemics between religious traditionalists and historians over the past three centuries can be reduced to the issue of which context shall be normative. When historical critics assert, as they are wont to do, that the Hebrew Bible must not be taken "out of context," what they really mean is that the only context worthy of respect is the ancient Near Eastern world as it was at the time of composition of whatever text is under discussion. Religious traditionalists, however, are committed to another set of contexts, minimally the rest of scripture, however delimited, and maximally, the entire tradition, including their own religious experience.[74]

Levenson might have added systematic theologians to his list, besides the traditionalists, for they are interested in synthesizing the many theological voices of Scripture and in searching

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[72] Roland E. Murphy, review of *Reading Ecclesiastes*, by Craig G. Bartholomew, *CBQ* 61.4 (1999): 734-5.

[73] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), xvii.

[74] Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible,* 4-5. Emphasis his.

out the relevance of the Bible's teaching today. The lack of contact today between the fields of exegetical theology and systematic theology (or dogmatics) is much to be regretted.[75] A synchronic approach to the recognition formula which attempts to relate the findings of exegesis to the wider theological enterprise, including today's questions of faith, is desirable. The radical Kantian split between knowledge and belief need not dominate today, as it once did.

1. A CONSERVATIVE PERSPECTIVE, CHRISTIAN & JEWISH

When first proposed, the documentary or development hypothesis of Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen failed to win acceptance among many scholars in both conservative and critical camps.[76] Conservative Christian scholarship was at the forefront of the opposition, both early on in Germany (Hengstenberg, Hävernick, Keil)[77] and later in the English-speaking world (Green, Vos, Orr).[78] Especially in America, that branch of scholarship has continued to defend the essential Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch—allowing for some aMosaica and some later minor editorial activity (updating of language and spelling, composition of Deuteronomy 34, etc.).[79] The textbook produced by the Fuller Seminary Old Testament

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[75] The plea for *rapprochement* is eloquently made in Joel B. Green and Max Turner (eds.), *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

[76] It is worth noting that, early on, many leading critical scholars flatly rejected any dating of P after Deuteronomy: August Dillmann, W. W. Graf Baudissin, Rudolf Kittel, Theodor Noeldeke, Eduard Riehm. See Young, *Introduction*, 138.

[77] Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Die Authentie des Pentateuches*, 3 vols. (Berlin: L. Oehmigke, 1836-39); H. A. Ch. Hävernick, *Handbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Erlangen: C. Heyder, 1836-44); Carl Friedrich Keil, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen und Apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testamentes* (Frankfurt: Heyder & Zimmer, 1873[3] [first ed. 1853]).

[78] William Henry Green, *The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso* (New York: John Wiley, 1863); idem, *Moses and the Prophets* (New York: Hurst, 1883); idem, *The Hebrew Feasts in Their Relation to Recent Critical Hypotheses* (New York: Robert Carter, 1885); idem, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895); idem, *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895); Geerhardus Vos, *The Mosaic Origin of the Pentateuchal Codes* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886); James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906).

[79] Robert Dick Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1929). Wilson was Professor of Semitic Philology at Princeton Theological Seminary and defended the following

faculty, William LaSor, David Hubbard, and Frederic Bush, affirms the statement of the Johns Hopkins Professor, William F. Albright, "It is . . . sheer hypercriticism to deny the substantially Mosaic character of the Pentateuchal tradition." They define their position as follows:

> Moses' role in the formation of the Pentateuch must be affirmed as highly original. The tradition is certainly credible in assigning him authorship of the Pentateuch, at least in the sense that the core of both the narrative framework and legislative material goes back to his literary instigation and authentically reflects both the circumstances and events of the epic there related. Although it is unlikely that Moses wrote the Pentateuch *as it exists in its final form*, the connectedness and uniformity of the evidence certainly affirms that he is the originator, instigator, and the most important figure in the stream of literary activity that produced it.[80]

The usual corollary to the conservative position regarding an earlier dating of the Books of Moses, including Exodus, is the interpretation that Ezekiel provides a commentary on portions of Exodus.[81]

There has been in Judaism a vigorous movement parallel to conservative Christian scholarship in its defense of the Pentateuch. Indeed, mainstream Jewish scholarship on the Hebrew Bible long had, and continues to have, a more traditional cast than mainstream Christian scholarship. Early Jewish scholars to reject Wellhausenism were Hoffmann, Wiener and Jacob.[82] More recently Cassuto and Segal have sought to present a strong case for Mosaic authorship.[83]

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position (p. 12): "That the Pentateuch as it stands is historical and from the time of Moses; and that Moses was its real author though it may have been revised and edited by later redactors, the additions being just as much inspired and as true as the rest." Following in Wilson's train have been: Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949); Oswald T. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses*, 2nd ed., (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1949); idem, *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Critics* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1972); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969); Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

[80] William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic Wm. Bush, *Old Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 62-3.

[81] Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 113.

[82] David Zevi Hoffmann, *Die Neueste Hypothese über den Pentateuchischen Priesterkodex* (1879-80); idem, *Die wichtige Instanzen gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese* (1916); Harold Marcus Wiener, *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism* (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra Co., 1909); Benno Jacob, *Quellenscheidung und Exegese im Pentateuch* (1916); idem, *Das Zweite Buch der Torah* (Jerusalem, no date), cited by Childs (*Exodus*, 113), translated as *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus*, trans. Walter Jacob with Yaakov Elman (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV, 1992).

There is not room in this dissertation to rehearse the conservative arguments. And it is unnecessary to do so for three reasons: 1) they are readily available for review in standard conservative introductions already cited; 2) there are a number of seasoned critical scholars who are presently arguing that there needs to be a re-awakening to the canonical, theological, and literary importance of the Mosaic authorship tradition;[84] and 3) some of the cutting edge literary scholarship on the Pentateuch, coming from higher critical circles over the last thirty years, has been pushing back the date of the alleged Priestly Source to pre-exilic times, thus encouraging research on Ezekiel's possible dependence upon Pentateuchal materials, and the book of Exodus in some recensional form. This dissertation, coming from a more conservative perspective at odds with older-style critical scholarship, will take the critics' encouragement to explore the proposition that Ezekiel draws from Exodus.

2. Revisionist Critical Scholarship On "P" And Ezekiel

Scholars have long recognized a close relation between the so-called Priestly Source (P) in the Pentateuch—thought to be the latest source—and the book of Ezekiel. There are numerous similarities in their topics of discussion and in their phraseology. Because Ezekiel comes from the priestly class, and the "Priestly School" is commonly thought to be responsible for the Priestly Source incorporated into the Bible, how does one evaluate their inter-relationship? The biblical scholar who has done the most work on the relationship between P and Ezekiel, Avi Hurvitz, states that

> Opinion is divided as to the appropriate interpretation of the literary proximity and phraseological similarities between these two compositions. The key questions in

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[83] U. Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1961); M. H. Segal, *The Pentateuch: Its Composition and Its Authorship and Other Biblical Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967).

[84] John F. A. Sawyer writes, "Even today it can be argued that the tradition that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is more important, from a religious, theological and literary point of view, than the fact that he did not." *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 102. Cf. Childs, *Introduction*, 132ff.

> this discussion are *who depends on whom* (literarily) and *who precedes whom* (historically).[85]

The arguments over these questions can become devilishly complex, because many have thought that both P and Ezekiel can be classified as a pastiche of redactional layers, and perhaps both were handled by the same redactors. In that case, how is one to draw any conclusions regarding precedence and literary dependence? Some hold that the recognition formula is late redactional material in both.

But now a surprising number of ranking biblical scholars, especially Jewish members of the guild, have challenged the long-standing critical assumption that the Priestly Source is post-exilic. P is not Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH), they say. They have argued in a provocative and persuasive way that, in the words of Hurvitz, "the Priestly source (in both its legal and narrative portions) falls within the compass of the classical corpora of the Bible"; the linguistic evidence points to the conclusion that "the 'formative' years which shaped the extant Priestly materials of the Pentateuch are those of the pre-exilic period."[86] Others, besides Hurvitz, who have advanced the scholarly discussion in this area are Kaufmann, Haran, Milgrom, and Zevit.[87] Though he has not published any substantial

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[85] Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem*, CahRB 20 (Paris: Gabalda, 1982), 10. This monograph builds on his earlier articles: "The Usage of שש and בוץ in the Bible and Its Implications for the Date of P," *HTR* 60 (1967): 117-21; "The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code—A Linguistic Study in Technical Idioms and Terminology," *RB* 81 (1974): 24-56. More recent articles from him touching on this issue are: "The Language of the Priestly Source and Its Historical Setting—The Case for an Early Date," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, 83-94 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1983); "Dating the Priestly Source in Light of the Historical Study of Biblical Hebrew a Century after Wellhausen," *ZAW* 100 Supplement (1988): 88-100; and "Once Again: The Linguistic Profile of the Priestly Material in the Pentateuch and its Historical Age, A Response to J. Blenkinsopp," *ZAW* 112.2 (2000): 180-191. Hurvitz provides an explanation and defense of his method; see "Can Biblical Texts Be Dated Linguistically? Chronological Perspectives in the Historical Study of Biblical Hebrew," in *Congress Volume, Oslo 1998*, eds., A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø, VTSup 80, pp. 143-60 (Leiden: Brill, 2000). He emphasizes that linguistic-philological considerations should outweigh the historical-chronological, the theological-ideological, and the literary-stylistic arguments when scholarship seeks to date texts of the Hebrew Bible. Hurvitz is among the handful who have done the deepest and most careful research into the linguistic dating of texts, i.e., seeking "to determine the age of the source material preserved in the Hebrew Bible" ("Can Biblical Texts," 159). No one but Mark Rooker, who sought to build upon Hurvitz, has approached his expertise in placing Ezekiel's prophecy on the continuum of the development of Biblical Hebrew. For the most current discussion of this technical branch of Semitic philology, see Ian Young, ed., *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, JSOTSup 369 (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003).

[86] Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship*, 7; idem, "Dating the Priestly Source," 99.

[87] Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, trans. and abr. Moshe Greenberg (New York: Schocken, 1960); idem, *History of the Religion of Israel*, Vol. IV, trans. C. W. Efroymson (New York: KTAV;

discussion of the issue, Moshe Greenberg appears to follow Kaufmann (whom he translated) regarding a pre-exilic P, and Greenberg may have influenced his student, Israel Knohl, toward the same conclusion.[88] As could have been expected, scholars with a commitment to some version of the older *Literarkritik* have challenged the shifting of the date of P earlier.[89]

It is Kaufmann's work especially which has given impetus to this mediating position. Kaufmann has attacked both the exilic dating of P—"in every detail, P betrays its antiquity"[90]—and Wellhausenism.

Jerusalem: Hebrew University; Dallas: Institute for Jewish Studies, 1977); Raymond Abba, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel," *VT* 28 (1978): 1-9; Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); idem, "The Law Code of Ezekiel XL–XLVIII and its Relations to the Priestly School," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 45-71; idem, "Behind the Scenes of History: Determining the Date of the Priestly Source," *JBL* 100 (1981) 321-33; idem, "The Character of the Priestly Source," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Panel Sessions: Bible Studies and Hebrew Language*, 131-38 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies; Magnes Press, 1983); Ziony Zevit, "Converging Lines of Evidence Bearing on the Date of P," *ZAW* 94 (1982): 481-511; J. Gordon McConville, "Priests and Levites in Ezekiel," *Tyndale Bulletin* 34 (1983): 3-31; William H. C. Propp, "The Priestly Source Recovered Intact?" *VT* 46 (1996): 458-78; Gordon J. Wenham, "The Priority of P," *VT* 49 (1999): 240-58. Jacob Milgrom's recent, influential commentaries on Leviticus and Numbers are based on his proposal of an earlier date for P. See his *Leviticus 1–16*, AB (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1991) 3-13, which presents over a dozen reasons for a pre-exilic dating of P. One may also consult Milgrom's collected essays in *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: Brill, 1983); his "Response to Rolf Rendtorff," *JSOT* 60 (1993) 83-85; and his article, "Priestly ('P') Source," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5: 546-61. Milgrom holds "that Ezekiel had all of P and most of H before him and, conversely, that there is not a single Priestly text that bears the influence of Ezekiel" ("Response to Rolf Rendtorff," 85). Further evidence supporting this conclusion is presented in Milgrom's "Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel," in *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, eds. Craig A. Evans, Shemaryahu Talmon, 57-62 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[88] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, ix; Israel Knohl, "The Historical Framework for the Activities of the Priestly School," 199-224, in *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), who writes, "I agree with Haran's identification of the reign of Ahaz and Hezekiah as a decisive period in the history of the Priestly writings" (201).

[89] Baruch A. Levine, "Research in the Priestly Source: The Linguistic Factor" (Hebrew), *Eretz-Israel* 16 (1982): 124-31; idem, "Late Language in the Priestly Source," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (previously cited), 69-82; idem, *Numbers 1–20*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 101ff.; G. I. Davies, review of *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship*, by Avi Hurvitz, *VT* 37 (1987): 117-8; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "An Assessment of the Alleged Pre-Exilic Date of the Priestly Material in the Pentateuch," *ZAW* 108.4 (1996): 495-518; and Ernest W. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century*, 196-221. Seemingly unconnected to any personal commitment to source analysis is the linguistic critique of Rooker, *et al.*, offered by J. A. Naudé, "The Language of the Book of Ezekiel: Biblical Hebrew in Transition?" *Old Testament Essays* 13 (2000): 46-71.

[90] Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 206.

> Wellhausen's arguments complemented each other nicely, and offered what seemed to be a solid foundation upon which to build the house of biblical criticism. Since then, however, both the evidence and the arguments supporting the structure have been called into question and, to some extent, even rejected. Yet biblical scholarship, while admitting that the grounds have crumbled away, nevertheless continues to adhere to the conclusions. The critique of Wellhausen's theory which began some forty years ago has not been consistently carried through to its end. Equally unable to accept the theory in its classical formulation and to return to the precritical views of tradition, biblical scholarship has entered upon a period of search for new foundations.[91]

In this same connection, one should take note of the work of Moshe Weinfeld who has made some compelling arguments that Deuteronomy, which he dates to the seventh century, cites and uses material from P, but P does not cite Deuteronomy.[92]

Attention can now also be drawn to the dissertation of Mark Rooker which rates the book of Ezekiel as the true transitional work between pre-exilic Early Biblical Hebrew (EBH) and Late Biblical Hebrew.[93] In a careful comparison with Ezekiel's lexical features, P appears to be the earlier of the two. Rooker also briefly treats the matter of possible use of sources and provides an abbreviated list of terminological connections he found between Ezekiel and texts in the Pentateuch. Led by his dissertation supervisor at Brandeis, Michael Fishbane, Rooker suggests that the phenomenon of inner-biblical exegesis is in play at those points.

Likely the most recently published dissertation to delve into the literary relationship of Ezekiel and P is Risa Levitt Kohn's. She provides an exceedingly full catalogue of shared terminology, for which future Ezekiel scholars should be grateful. Of particular interest for this dissertation is her chapter 3, "Ezekiel and the Priestly Source Reconsidered," which

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[91] Ibid., 1. That search mentioned by Kaufmann continues without abatement. For a review of Kaufmann's scholarly contribution, see Thomas M. Krapf, *Die Priesterschrift und die vorexilische Zeit. Yehezkel Kaufmanns vernachlässigter Beitrag zur Geschichte der biblischen Religion*, OBO 119 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 1992). Krapf argues that Kaufmann has been mislabelled as "fundamentalist" by German scholarship, and that Kaufmann's writings demand more attention from Christian scholars.

[92] Moshe Weinfeld, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Pentateuch," 13:231-61; idem, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Kaufmann's work, cited above, also set out to prove that P pre-dated Deuteronomy. In this same connection one may also refer to Martin Noth's *History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, which posits a priestly redaction of J/E predating a Deuteronomic redaction.

[93] Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book of Ezekiel*, JSOTSup 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 53. Many of his conclusions are explained in brief in "Ezekiel and the Typology of Biblical Hebrew," *Hebrew Annual Review* 12 (1990): 133-55.

analyses the links in content and terminology and concludes that Ezekiel engages in inner-biblical exegesis.

> Ezekiel is familiar with the Priestly Source, but, clearly, his writing is more than just a product of its influence or tradition. The prophet appropriates P's terminology but feels comfortable situating it in new, different, and even contradictory contexts. . . . Ezekiel knows P, quotes P, but also modifies it at will, adding and deleting material as suits his personal agenda and the current circumstances of his audience.[94]

This is not the place to discuss at length the arguments in the controversy over the dating of P; helpfully others have already reviewed scholarly developments.[95] Though revisionist scholars such as Hurvitz, Milgrom and Levitt Kohn are not returning to an older conservative position and propounding the Mosaic authorship of the vast body of material in the Pentateuch, their work has encouraged me to proceed more boldly in detailing Ezekiel's use of the text of Exodus.[96] An increasing weight of evidence is being thrown behind the position that P is pre-exilic. As Wenham writes,

> . . . a postexilic date for Leviticus [and the other books of the Pentateuch as well] is difficult to maintain in face of the abundant quotations in Ezekiel and of the linguistic evidence that P's vocabulary does not resemble that of late biblical Hebrew. A much earlier date is required by the evidence.[97]

Because the dating of P is "a tentative enterprise at best,"[98] it is to be hoped that older-style documentary theories will not cause readers to balk at recent proposals of a pre-exilic

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[94] Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah*, JSOTSup 358 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 84-5. She also deals with Ezekiel's literary relationship to Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. For an encapsulation of Levitt Kohn's arguments, see "A Prophet like Moses? Rethinking Ezekiel's Relationship to the Torah," *ZAW* 114 (2002): 236-254.

[95] In addition to works cited in previous footnotes, see David R. Hildebrand, "A Summary of Recent Findings in Support of an Early Date for the So-Called Priestly Material of the Pentateuch," *JETS* 29 (1986): 129-38. Hildebrand is one of several conservatives who has enthusiastically greeted the revisionist direction that some recent critical works have taken. For a very early evangelical response to Kaufmann, see K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), 114.

[96] Especially encouraging is the strongly worded conclusion of Gary Rendsburg's article, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Date of P," *JANES* 12 (1980): 65-80. He believes the evidence for a much earlier dating of P is compelling (78): "In fact, typologically the entire Pentateuch may be considered a unified work and may be dated to a time earlier than the composition of Joshua, Judges and Samuel. This is not to say that writers of the Davidic period did not add such phrases as the boundaries given in Genesis 15:18, but as a whole the Pentateuch is ancient."

[97] Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 13. Bracketed phrase added.

[98] Childs, *Introduction*, 124.

date for the so-called Priestly Source. Hopefully, most will remain open to one of the central theses of this dissertation, that Ezekiel draws from Pentateuchal materials, including P texts. In view of all the long-standing confusion in Pentateuchal criticism,[99] Rendtorff cautions against a dogmatic position on a post-exilic P:

> We really do not possess reliable criteria for dating the pentateuchal literature. Each dating of the pentateuchal 'sources' relies on purely hypothetical assumptions which in the long run have their continued existence because of the consensus of scholars. . . . It must be said that the common dating of the 'priestly' sections, be they narrative or legal, to the exilic or post exilic period, likewise rests on conjecture and the consensus of scholars, but not on unambiguous criteria.[100]

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[99] Old Testament scholarship has for many years been liberally sprinkled with pessimistic quotes, reviewing the results of Pentateuchal criticism. E.g., H. H. Rowley wrote in 1959, that we "find a more confused position today than at any time since the rise of criticism." See *The Changing Pattern of Old Testament Studies* (London: Epworth Press, 1959), 11. John I. Durham wrote of the Sinai narrative in Exodus, "Though many helpful observations may be harvested from the critical work of more than a century, the sum total of that work is a clear assertion that no literary solution to this complex narrative has been found, with more than a hint that none is likely to be found." (Durham, *Exodus*, WBC [Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987], 259, cited in T. D. Alexander, "The Composition of the Sinai Narrative in Exodus XIX 1 – XXIV 11," *VT* 49 [1999]: 2). Douglas Knight's description of the *statis quaestionis* which obtained in 1985 is also worth quoting. "Given these two factors—that the Pentateuch has so often served as the subject matter for innovative criticism throughout the history of biblical scholarship and that this literature is of crucial importance for our study of Israel's cultural history—it is all the more disconcerting to observe that uncertainties and disputes at very fundamental points are prevalent in current Pentateuchal studies. (264) . . . The important point for us is that Pentateuchal studies is hardly in a favorable position at the present point. The synthesis (von Rad/Noth) that explained so much about the formative history and meaning of the literature has met with such formidable opposition at individual points that only with multiple reservations can one defend it any longer. . . . However, there is no other grand plan, at the present, which promises to take the place of this influential proposal." ("The Pentateuch," 271-2).

[100] Rolf Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*, trans. John J. Scullion, JSOTSup 89 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 201-203. The original is *Das Überlieferungs-geschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch*, BZAW 147 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977). Rendtorff is reckoned among the strongest voices challenging the Documentary Hypothesis. Here we quickly acknowledge the variety of the attacks on Graf-Wellhausen. So many significant adjustments have been made (e.g., multiplying the number of sources even more, erasing E entirely, extreme alterations made to the dating of documents, etc.), that a growing number believe the Hypothesis has "died the death of a thousand qualifications" and should be replaced. The radical Ivan Engnell repudiates all literary sources. Westermann cannot find E in Genesis. According to Cross, P is no independent source at all, but rather a redaction of J/E (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973]). Rendtorff has agreed with von Rad that "the combination of various sources was not a 'clear process which allowed of any satisfactory explanation'" (*The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. John Bowden [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985], 160). Instead, von Rad and Rendtorff employ an alternate model of growing complexes of tradition, and they distinguish different processes of development for different books. A final theological structure and interpretation were provided by Deuteronomic or Deuteronomistic redactors. For Van Seters, the Yahwist is very late (exilic?), and he engaged in redaction of some earlier materials; P, as another redactional stage, is to be dated even later. Further, he encourages scholarship to compare the Pentateuch with the ancient Greek histories, especially Herodotus (*Abraham in History and Tradition* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975]; *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983]; and *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992]). Also arguing for a later dating is Erhard Blum (*Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189

3. INNER-BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

It has been said that Scripture "is full of itself"[101] and that "the Bible is littered with self-referential allusions."[102] Recent biblical scholars, using such methods as inner-biblical exegesis and intertextuality, have been paying more attention to the interpretation of the Old Testament *within* the Old Testament.[103] Looking into the Scriptures themselves, they have found evidence of the earliest stages of biblical exegesis. Of course, this phenomenon has long been recognized in New Testament scholarship, where abundant quotations and interpretations of Old Testament texts are woven into the gospels, Acts, the epistles, and the book of Revelation. What is new and exciting is the amount of attention being given in Old Testament studies to various approaches to reading texts in relation to other texts—many of the approaches having been developed by literary scholars in the humanities. In this section we will focus upon inner-biblical exegesis or inner-biblical interpretation,[104] which has developed mainly within Jewish scholarship on the Hebrew Bible and on Midrash.

[Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990]), who believes the Pentateuch was formed as a supplementary P, which had never existed as an independent strand, was joined to a (possibly seventh century) Deuteronomistic narrative of the Patriarchs and Moses. Whybray appeals for a newer literary approach and has proposed the simplest of solutions: the Pentateuch had but a single author, and the first edition was the final one (*The Making of the Pentateuch*, previously cited, 232ff.). Many, too, see today's literary readings as completely undermining all source analysis. Can there be an originally independent J and P in the Flood narrative—the *locus classicus* for source criticism—if an elaborate chiastic structure unites the whole (see Gordon J. Wenham, "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," *VT* 28 [1978]: 336-48)? What is the use of old-style literary criticism if today's narrative criticism suggests that doublets are purposeful literary devices to be appreciated as elements of the narrator's art? (See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 1981], and *The Five Books of Moses* [New York: Norton, 2004]).

[101] James A. Sanders, review of *The Garments of Torah* by Michael Fishbane, in *Theology Today* 47 (1991): 433.

[102] Lyle Eslinger, "Inner-biblical Exegesis and Inner-biblical Allusion: The Question of Category," *VT* 42.1 (1992): 47.

[103] Representative articles would be: Michael Fishbane, "Numbers 5:11-31: A Study of Law and Scribal Practice in Israel and the Ancient Near East," *HUCA* 45 (1974): 25-45; David J. Halperin, "The Exegetical Character of Ezek. X 9-17," *VT* 26.2 (1976): 129-41; Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Chronicler as Exegete," *JSOT* 2 (1977): 2-32; and David J. A. Clines, "Nehemiah 10 as an Example of Early Jewish Biblical Exegesis," *JSOT* 21 (1981): 111-17.

[104] Both of these labels are widely used, with "inner-biblical interpretation" being the more general and probably more useful term.

There was a time, decades ago, when nearly "all students of Hebrew literature assumed a wide and impassable chasm between the Bible and the literary products of post-canonical Judaism."[105] More recent research in the fields of midrashic and haggadic interpretation and Qumran commentary (*pesher*) have led many to see that similar modes of interpretation are to be found within the Hebrew Bible. (Is not the noun מדרש found in the text of Chronicles?)[106] Rather than a chasm, there is some continuity[107] from the rabbis back to the biblical writers who reflected upon, cited, and interpreted earlier Scriptures (the earliest midrashic exegesis). Long before the rabbis offered commentary upon the Tanakh, the biblical writers engaged in exegesis. Those who made this discovery asserted that the Hebrew Bible should be read as an exegetical work in its own right, that is, with an understanding that textual analysis and biblical interpretation were already being practiced in ancient Israel.

Though modern students of the Old Testament have customarily thought of Scripture as that upon which exegesis and interpretation must be practiced, there is exegesis *within* the Hebrew Bible. Both canonical criticism[108] and inner-biblical interpretation have shown a sensitivity to this reality and both methods have enriched Old Testament scholarship by probing literary and theological relationships between authoritative texts. One quote from

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[105] Robert Gordis, "Midrash and the Prophets," *JBL* 49 (1930): 417-22.

[106] Cf. the differing evaluations of those occurrences in Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 110; and Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 700.

[107] See J. Weingreen, *From Bible to Mishna: The Continuity of Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976). Earlier works which pressed this point were I. L. Seeligmann, "Voraussetzungen der Midraschexegese," in *Congress Volume: Copenhagen 1953*, VTSup 1, 150-81 (Leiden: Brill, 1953); Renée Bloch, "Ezéchiel XVI: Exemple Parfait du Procédé Midrashique dans la Bible," *Cahiers Sioniens* 9 (1955): 193-223; idem, "Midrash," in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 5, 1263-81, (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1957); and Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, Studia Post-Biblica 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961).

[108] Brevard Childs, who now resists the label "canonical criticism" and prefers "canonical approach," was among the first important Christian critics to welcome inner-biblical exegesis as a promising new approach. See "Reflections on the Modern Study of the Psalms," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, eds. Frank Moore Cross, W. E. Lemke, Patrick D. Miller, Jr., 377-88 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976).

Brevard Childs' *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* has been seminal for all of the study behind this dissertation:

> Surely one of the most important aspects of Ezekiel's message was its dependence upon the activity of interpretation within the Bible itself. Not only was Ezekiel deeply immersed in the ancient *traditions* of Israel, but the prophet's message shows many signs of being influenced by a study of Israel's sacred *writings.* The impact of a collection of authoritative writings is strong throughout the book. Obviously, the mediating of Israel's tradition through an authoritative written source represents a major canonical interest. The evidence that such activity was a major factor in the formulation of Ezekiel's original oracles would also account for the ease with which the canonical process adopted his oracles without great change.[109]

If the trailblazing theorists for inner-biblical interpretation were Robert Gordis, Samuel Sandmel, Jacob Weingreen, Yehezkel Kaufmann, and Nahum Sarna,[110] Michael Fishbane is today's most experienced and methodologically-savvy practitioner.[111] He has a sharp eye for changes in linguistic content and linguistic force as themes, words, phrases, and whole passages are "re-used" by a biblical exegete. Fishbane questions how a writer takes up an

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[109] Childs, *Introduction*, 364 [emphasis added]. The Yale Professor was helped to these conclusions by his study of Jewish post-canonical writings. See his article, "Midrash and the Old Testament," in *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in Honor of Morton S. Enslin*, ed. John Reumann, 45-59 (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1972). We are able, he says, to trace "the development of the [midrashic] method back into the Old Testament period" (47).

[110] Gordis, "Midrash and the Prophets," (previously cited); Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, and *History of the Religion of Israel* (both previously cited); J. Weingreen, "Rabbinic-Type Glosses in the Old Testament," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2 (1957): 149-62; idem, "Exposition in the Old Testament and in Rabbinical Literature," in *Promise and Fulfilment: Essays Presented to S. H. Hooke*, ed. F. F. Bruce, 187-201 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963); Samuel Sandmel, "The Haggada within Scripture," *JBL* 80 (1961): 105-22, reprinted in *Old Testament Issues*, ed. S. Sandmel, 94-118, Harper Forum Books, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Nahum Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study in Inner-Biblical Exegesis," in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. A. Altmann, 29-46, Brandeis Texts and Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963); and A. G. Wright, "The Literary Genre Midrash," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 105-38.

[111] The more significant Fishbane works dealing with inner-biblical interpretation are: "Torah and Tradition," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas A. Knight, 275-300 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979); "Revelation and Tradition: Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis." *JBL* 99 (1980): 343-61; *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); "Inner-biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel," in *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*, 3-18 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); *The Exegetical Imagination: On Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998). Of interest in this dissertation, which employs both inner-biblical interpretation and intertextuality, is Fishbane's identification of his approach as intertextual. He would be using a broader definition of 'intertextuality' in making this claim; he is not at all practicing the postmodern style of intertextual study. See Fishbane, "Types of Biblical Intertextuality," in *Congress Volume, Oslo 1998*, eds. A. Lemaire and M. Sæbø, 38-44, VTSup 80 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

earlier text to "re-use," "re-contextualise," "extend," "reformulate," re-interpret" or "transform" it. Research into the function of echoing an earlier sacred utterance is also important to Fishbane. The function can vary: authoritative reference; reinterpretation; clarification; preservation of an authoritative memory; revitalization of what has perhaps become a "dead letter"; etc.

Earlier on, this chapter discussed the tradition history approach with its strong stress upon oral tradition. While Fishbane shows an indebtedness to practitioners of the traditio-historical method,[112] he has also made a very significant modification to the older method. He explains that

> [W]hereas the study of tradition-history moves back from the written sources to the oral traditions which make them up, inner-biblical exegesis starts with the received Scripture and moves forward to the interpretations based on it. In tradition-history, written formulations are the final of the many oral stages of *traditio* during which the traditions themselves become authoritative; by contrast, inner-biblical exegesis begins with an authoritative *traditum.*[113]

Patrick Miller comments that, "The distinction is an important one. Inner-biblical exegesis assumes an authoritative tradition and a 'stabilized literary formulation as its basis and point of departure.'"[114] These ideas have been seminal for this Ezekiel study and its method.

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[112] The debt is especially to Douglas A. Knight of Vanderbilt, from whom he takes and develops the ideas of *traditio* (the handing down), and *traditum* (what was handed down), and how the former has modified the latter. See Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel.* (Another scholar using the term *traditum* in a manner similar to Knight and Fishbane is Zimmerli; see his chapter, "Prophetic Proclamation and Reinterpretation," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas Knight, 98f.) James Sanders' book, *Torah & Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), must also be mentioned here. Sanders' method of "canonical criticism" (xi) and his discussion of tradition history in relation to ancient Jewish midrash (xii-xx) apparently played a role in inspiring Fishbane's adaptation of traditio-historical research.

[113] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 7. He has poignant remarks about "the great methodological flaw of tradition-history" in this same work (pp. 8-9), which undergird his adaptation to *written sources.* Fishbane seeks to escape the problems of subjectivity and circularity which frequently plague the method as it is practiced: "A *traditio* is inferred from a received *traditum*, and this 'recovered' *traditio* serves, in turn, as a principal means for isolating the components of that same *traditum.*" Samuel Sandmel earlier made a similar adaptation of tradition-history research; see "The Haggada within Scripture" (previously cited). Sandmel's article offers pointed criticism of tradition-history researchers (*JBL* 80: 108): ". . . I sometimes have the feeling that some exponents of oral traditions so stress the oral that they forget that their pursuit is what lies behind documents which are written; and while one can overlook their scorn of literary critics, it seems a little more difficult to forgive their scorn of written documents. . . . And when the searcher for the sources forgets the particular document allegedly containing a source, the student has embarked on an egregious tangent. An oblivion to the text itself seems to me the greatest defect in present-day biblical scholarship."

[114] Miller, review of *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 378 [quote taken from Fishbane, 7].

4. THE ALTERNATIVE OF A SYNCHRONIC APPROACH: INTERTEXTUALITY

> Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
> We murder to dissect.
>
> – Wordsworth[115]

Both in the natural sciences and in literary criticism, those who wish to prove the rigor and thorough-going quality of their *Wissenschaft* may mis-shape what is studied through dissection. In biblical exegesis the results of older style literary criticism and newer redaction criticism have often been more than implausible. They have been ugly. One can anticipate that the Bible scholar who expects to find no "beauteous forms" (no coherence nor unity), will not find them[116] and will mishandle the beauteous forms which are unacknowledged.

A widespread and growing dissatisfaction with the results of the old historical criticism has contributed to the trend toward final-form approaches. In his famous 1968 Presidential Address to the Society of Biblical Literature,[117] Old Testament scholar James Muilenburg expressed dissatisfaction with tools such as form criticism when he proposed, *as a form critic*, that a renewed "rhetorical criticism" could serve interpreters well as a supplementary and complementary approach. In 1971, Roland Frye, Professor of English Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, did an evaluation of New Testament studies and expressed similar sentiments regarding the shortcomings of the older methods:

> I get the impression that a highly complex game is being played—a game with rules as artificial as those of chess, and of course far more demanding intellectually. In source-critical, form-critical, and redaction-critical analyses, we are repeatedly presented with highly rationalized suppositions, built layer upon layer into intriguing structures of marvelous intricacy. But when we look for evidence, there is very rarely anything which would be convincing, at least to leading literary historians in

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[115] William Wordsworth, *Wordsworth Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, revision ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904) "The Tables Turned" ("Up! up! my Friend, and Quit your Books"), lines 26-28.

[116] Otto Kaiser's canon of interpretation is "to view each text as a redactional creation until the contrary is proven," cited in Zimmerli's *Ezekiel 2*, xiii.

[117] James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969): 1-18.

> the humanities. It is a pity to see eminent scholarly minds spending so much time on such elaborate intellectual jigsaw puzzles.[118]

Esteemed literary critics in the humanities have indeed said amazingly harsh things about the historical criticism practiced in biblical scholarship. For example, the renowned Professor of English at the University of Toronto, Northrop Frye—unrelated to Roland—judged that much "higher" criticism of the Bible deserves neither its adjective nor respect:

> Instead of emerging from lower criticism, or textual study, most of it [higher criticism of the Bible] dug itself into a still lower, or sub-basement, criticism in which disintegrating the text became an end in itself.[119]

These literary critics, reflecting upon the shape of historical criticism in biblical studies, have complained about text fragmentation, implausible reconstructions of compositional history, lack of sympathy with the text, the deprecation or exclusion of passages "because they do not fit the general prejudgements of a particular critic or school of critics,"[120] and a simple failure to elucidate the text. There is also the common sense allegation that the critics who have attempted major reconstructions of biblical texts are interpreting but their own creations. Without agreement with regard to the base text to be interpreted, scholarship will continue to experience frustration and diminished returns.[121] A turn toward final-form approaches seems to many interpreters a high, dry way out of a morass.

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[118] Roland Mushat Frye, "A Literary Perspective for the Criticism of the Gospels," *Jesus and Man's Hope*, vol. 2, eds. Donald G. Miller and Dikran Y. Hadidian (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971) 213. Cited by D. A. Carson, "Redaction Criticism: The Nature of an Interpretive Tool," Christianity Today Institute; Monograph Number 1 (Carol Stream, Illinois: Christianity Today, 1985), 23. In this same connection, one might also cite C. S. Lewis, once Tutor in English literature at Oxford and finally Professor of Mediaeval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge. He wrote, "First then, whatever these men may be as Biblical critics, I distrust them as critics. They seem to me to lack literary judgement, to be imperceptive about the very quality of the texts they are reading. . . . These men ask me to believe they can read between the lines of the old texts; the evidence is their obvious inability to read (in any sense worth discussing) the lines themselves. They claim to see fern-seed and can't see an elephant ten yards away in broad daylight." See "Fern-seed and Elephants," in *Fern-seed and Elephants and Other Essays on Christianity*, ed. Walter Hooper ([London]: Fontana/Collins, 1975), 106-7, 111.

[119] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), xvii. Frye's stature may be judged by the fact that his book, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957, is classed by some with Aristotle's *Poetics*. See James M. Kee, "Introduction," *Semeia 89: Northrop Frye and the Afterlife of the Word* (2002): 1.

[120] Roland Frye, "A Literary Perspective," 196.

[121] Hans Barstad expressed the frustration of many when he wrote, "Evidently, most of the questions that were raised when the scientific study of biblical prophecy was first introduced upon the scholarly scene appear to remain as unanswered today as they were then" (Hans M. Barstad, "No Prophets? Recent

Among all the synchronic methods of the newer literary criticism now in vogue, the approach of intertextual studies seems the best suited and the most fruitful for researching the recognition formulae of Ezekiel and their relation to other recognition formulae scattered over several Old Testament books. Intertextuality explores the way texts interpenetrate, and interact with, other texts. The term "intertextual" is often used in a broad sense to denote a variety of reading methods—methods of reading similar texts—which are usually synchronic and which seek to move beyond the diachronic concerns of literary history which have long dominated modern literary and biblical scholarship. The literary critic, Thaïs Morgan, explains,

> Intertextuality replaces the evolutionary model of literary history with a structural or synchronic model of literature as a sign system. The most salient effect of this strategic change is to free the literary text from psychological, sociological and historical determinisms, opening it up to an apparently infinite play of relationships.[122]

Defining intertextuality and describing the method are almost bound to be misleading because there is little unity to the method; this is perhaps due to the multidisciplinary nature of the newer literary criticism. "Exegetes differ about the way in which intertextuality should function as a model of inquiry when applied to biblical texts."[123] The literature proves this, as exegetes using the method seem to delight in breaking conventions, challenging consensual readings, and encouraging others to read familiar texts differently than they have before. Also, as one examines intertextual studies on biblical literature, there

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Developments in Biblical Prophetic Research and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy," *JSOT* 57 [1993], 39). See also the quotations earlier in this chapter regarding a lack of results in Pentateuchal scholarship.

[122] "Is There an Intertext in This Text?: Literary and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality," *American Journal of Semiotics* 3 (1985): 1-2.

[123] Sipke Draisma, "Bas van Iersel: From Minister of the Word to Minister of the Reader," in *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel*, ed. Sipke Draisma (Kampen: Uitversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1989), 11. See also J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines, "The New Literary Criticism," in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, eds., J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1993). They characterize the no-holds-barred, adventurous spirit of many exploring intertextuality and other methods: "In Hebrew Bible 'new' literary studies . . . there is no bad blood, *no methodological purism*, no 'school' mentality, no sneers at other approaches" (p. 13, emphasis added). One of the better introductions to intertextuality in its varied formulations is *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, eds. Jay Clayton, and Eric Rothstein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

is often an obvious mixing of synchronic and diachronic concerns. (This is sometimes thought to be a corruption of the intertextual method.) Some use the language of intertextuality as they examine how texts are utilized creatively in other texts and especially the function of the inner-biblical quotations or allusions within their present canonical context. More historical questions of "influence" can come to dominate. Diversity within intertextual studies will be further discussed below.

Attempting only the most general of definitions, one may say that from the perspective of intertextuality, "texts are interdependent and use each other. No text is an island."[124] Its general point of view is that "every text is constrained by the literary system of which it is a part, and that every text is ultimately dialogical in that it cannot but record the traces of its contentions and doubling of earlier discourses."[125] For biblical exegetes, the term usually has a more limited significance, and it may or may not be connected to post-structuralist semiotic theories: "the interaction between the specific text which is the object of study, and one or more additional texts (the intertext)."[126]

The term "intertextuality" (or *intertextualité*) derives from an essay of Julia Kristeva dating back to 1966 and published in 1969.[127] Kristeva was seeking to explain the post-structuralist ideas and methods of Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian literary theorist. Bakhtin had argued that "literary structure does not simply exist but is generated in relation to *another* text," and that "each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least

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[124] Peter D. Miscall, "Isaiah: New Heavens, New Earth, New Book," in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 45.

[125] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 14. Cited in G. Savran, "Beastly Speech: Intertextuality, Balaam's Ass and the Garden of Eden," *JSOT* 64 (1994) 36.

[126] Savran, "Beastly Speech," 36.

[127] Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, trans. Seán Hand, Alice Jardine, Léon S. Roudiez, *et al.*, 34- 61 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). The original essay was "Let mot, le dialogue et le roman," in *Séméiotiké: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), 143-73. Cited in Robert P. Carroll, "Intertextuality and the Book of Jeremiah: Animadversions on Text and Theory," in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, 57.

one other word (text) can be read."[128] Kristeva coins and explains the term intertextuality as pointing to:

> . . . an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double.[129]

It is clear that Kristeva means for every text to be read intertextually. At least she would posit that every text *may* be read intertextually. Texts should be understood as having an intertextuality regarding both their production and their reception. They can be written only in relationship to other texts, and they can be read only in relationship.[130] These ideas have proved revolutionary and seminal for many scholars, both in the humanities[131] and in biblical studies. Rightly interpreted, however, the theory of intertextuality is more far-reaching than any mere understanding of literature and literary relations; intertextuality encompasses all of a culture's means of generating meaning or attaching meaning to the culture's bits and pieces. Jonathan Culler writes,

> 'Intertextuality' thus has a double focus. On the one hand, it calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading

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[128] Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, 37.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Kristeva emphasized the former. We should note that intertextuality, according to the theories of Bakhtin, Kristeva and Barthes, touches more than texts. All human expressions—a word spoken, art in the form of some visual representation (a movie, painting, dance, sculpture), music, architecture, a kiss (?), et cetera—have an "intertextual" reality.

[131] In addition to Kristeva's interpretation of his work, Mikhail Bakhtin has a number of works in English translation. See especially his volume of essays entitled, *The Dialogic Imagination* (previously cited). For other important works on intertextuality, see Jeanine Parisier Plottel and Hanna Charney, eds., *Intertextuality: New Perspectives in Criticism* (New York: New York Literary Forum, 1978); Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1981); Laurent Jenny, "The Strategy of Form," in *French Literary Theory Today*, ed. Tzvetan Todorov, trans. R. Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 34-63 = "La Stratégie de la Forme," *Poétique* 27 (1976); Michael Riffaterre, "Intertextual Representation: On Mimesis as Interpretive Discourse," *Critical Inquiry* 11 (1984): 141-62; Manfred Pfister, "Konzepte der Intertextualität," in *Intertextualität, Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, eds. Ulrich Broich and Manfred Pfister (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1985), 1-30; Thaïs Morgan, "The Space of Intertextuality," in *Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction*, eds. Patrick O'Donnell, and Robert Con Davis, 239-79 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); M. Worton and J. Still, eds., *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); Clayton and Rothstein, eds., *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (previously cited). Early work in the field of intertextuality has been cataloged in the survey of Don Bruce, "Bibliographie Annotée Écrits sur L'Intertextualité," *Texte* 2 (1983): 217-58.

> notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written. Yet in so far as it focuses on intelligibility, on meaning, 'intertextuality' leads us to consider prior texts as contributions to a code which makes possible the various effects of signification. Intertextuality thus becomes less a name for a work's relation to particular prior texts than a designation of its participation in the discursive space of a culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture. The study of intertextuality is thus not the investigation of sources and influences as traditionally conceived; it casts its net wider to include anonymous discursive practices, codes whose origins are lost, that make possible the signifying practices of later texts. Barthes warns that from the perspective of intertextuality 'the quotations of which a text is made are anonymous, untraceable, and nevertheless *already read*' . . .[132]

It has only been in the last fifteen years that intertextuality has come to the fore in biblical scholarship, and the literature is much more restricted.[133] Intertextual studies in biblical exegesis tend to be rather different in style from contemporary humanistic scholarship for at least two reasons. Comparative studies of Bible texts and the linking of Bible references (e.g., chain references) have long been done, as long as commentaries have been written for the benefit of the Church. Some of the biblical scholars doing intertextual work complain that others are corrupting the method by merely using literary theory to supply labels as they continue to practice traditional comparative studies.[134] Secondly, as has already been discussed in this chapter, Jewish scholarship and those involved in Judaic

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[132] Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 103. The Roland Barthes quote, contained in Culler here, comes from "De l'oeuvre au texte," *Revue d'esthétique* (1971): 229.

[133] Note particularly the works already cited in this section: *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible;* and *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible.* Also see *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel*, ed. Johannes C. de Moor, Oudtestamentische Studiën 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1998). The van Iersel *Festschrift* is directed toward the application of intertextuality to the New Testament. Finally, see *Semeia 69/70: Intertextuality and the Bible* (1995).

[134] Ellen van Wolde, "Trendy Intertextuality?" in *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings: Essays in Honour of Bas van Iersel*, 43-49. We note that van Wolde was anticipated by Julia Kristeva herself, who in 1974 expressed her displeasure at the development and even went to the extent of suggesting a different term for the phenomenon ("Revolution in Poetic Language," in *The Kristeva Reader*, 111): "The term *intertextuality* denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources', we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic—of enunciative and denotive positionality. If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an intertextuality), one then understands that its 'place' of enunciation and its denoted 'object' are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. In this way polysemy can also be seen as the result of a semiotic polyvalence—an adherence to different sign-systems." Is there perhaps some irony here, that the fluidity of sign-systems, including her own terminology (as used by others), frustrates Kristeva and leads her to select a different "sign" with a more circumscribed "articulation," one she herself as an author circumscribes? She experiences "the plural," and "the shattered."

studies have been researching what they term "early midrashic exegesis *within* the Hebrew Bible." Michael Fishbane and others who have published in that field will describe their work as intertextual in nature.[135] It is true that intertextuality and the study of midrashic exegesis can deal in similar ways with, and ask similar questions about, the relationships between texts. As Robert Carroll writes, "biblical midrash is inevitably intertextual."[136] However, the mingling of these approaches, which come originally from very different sectors of the academy (postmodern French literary theory and the history of Jewish hermeneutics), is difficult to accomplish without altering both.

Kristeva's "intertextuality" has been modified and adapted by biblical scholars in varying degrees, and one can perhaps speak of two different "schools" clustered around the theorists who follow "the Kristeva-Barthian traditions" (George Aichele, Tina Pippin, Gary Phillips), and followers of "the more restrained path of H. Bloom, and particularly of Richard Hays"[137] (Kirsten Nielsen, Gail O'Day, Patricia Tull [Willey], Robert Brawley). The latter group, which now appears to be on the ascendancy,[138] prefers to retain diachronic

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[135] Alongside the works of Fishbane, Seeligmann, Bloch, Sandmel, and Childs which were cited earlier, see also: G. H. Hartman and S. Budick, eds., *Midrash and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Jacob Neusner, *Canon and Connection: Intertextuality in Judaism* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1987); and D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash.*

[136] Carroll, "Intertextuality," 70. Also note the work of Boyarin in the preceding footnote. While the similarities can be highlighted, it should not be overlooked that biblical midrash (or inner-biblical interpretation) commonly keeps "influence" in mind, while intertextuality tends to be overtly synchronic.

[137] Fred W. Burnett, review of *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts*, by Robert L. Brawley, in *Religious Studies Review* 24.1 (1998): 87. Important works to reference are: Gary A. Phillips, "Drawing the Other: The Postmodern and Reading the Bible Imaginatively," in *In Good Company: Essays in Honor of Robert Detweiler*, eds. David Jasper, Mark Ledbetter, 403-31 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994); George Aichele, Gary A. Phillips, eds., *Intertextuality and the Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Ellen van Wolde, "Texts in Dialogue with Texts"; Tina Pippin, *Apocalyptic Bodies: The Biblical End of the World in Text and Image* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999); George Aichele, *The Control of Biblical Meaning: Canon as Semiotic Mechanism* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001); and George Aichele, Richard Walsh, eds., *Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections between Scripture and Film* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002). Examples of the more restrained are: Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (previously cited); Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah*, SBLDS 161 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997); and Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets*, JSOTSup 180 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[138] G. R. O'Day, "Intertextuality," in *Methods of Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 156. She writes, "In biblical studies, the narrower use of intertextuality—that is, patterns of literary

concerns about sources, precedence, authorial intent, influence, and borrowing, "without making them the center of attention."[139] Somewhat in a class of her own is the brilliant Carol Newsom of the Candler School of Theology, who builds upon Bakhtin's idea of dialogism more than others. She pursues a synchronic and postmodern intertextual approach to biblical studies without a deconstructionist application.[140]

Because "uncertainty is congenital to the approach to literary interrelationships through literary history,"[141] due to the frequent difficulty in demonstrating precedence, many scholars exploring intertextuality are choosing to bracket diachronic concerns. Literary connections between biblical texts are often demonstrable, but for those using the methods and assumptions of historical criticism the issue of textual precedence is often far less clear. Lexical linkages and the reuse of themes may be apparent in comparing two texts, but the priority of one to the other may be quite difficult to demonstrate. All acknowledge that the Bible is full of "mutual relationships," and where there is some uncertainty about which direction the vector of influence points—and even where there is no uncertainty—a scholar using the intertextual method may proffer inner-biblical interpretations running in both directions.[142] And in line with intertextuality's marked preference for synchronic readings, standard questions of "influence" and literary borrowing along with concerns for priority are typically ignored or thrown out. (This is particularly true of the Kristeva-Barthian tradition.) Frow explains,

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borrowing among literary texts proper and textual relationships between specific literary corpora—is most prevalent. Intertextuality in the broader sense has been absorbed into general deconstructionist biblical interpretation."

[139] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 198.

[140] Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16. We may contrast David J. A. Clines, "Deconstructing the Book of Job," in *What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament*, 106-23, JSOTSup 94 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990); idem, "Job's Fifth Friend: An Ethical Critique of the Book of Job," *Biblical Interpretation* 12.3 (2004): 233-50.

[141] Eslinger, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis," 53-54.

[142] See, for example, Thomas B. Dozeman, "Inner-biblical Interpretation of Yahweh's Gracious and Compassionate Character," *JBL* 108 (1989) 207-23. Dozeman does not describe his approach as intertextual (and shows concern for diachronic issues), but his reading in both directions is in line with intertextuality.

> Intertextual analysis is distinguished from source criticism both by this stress on interpretation rather than on the establishment of particular facts, and by its rejection of a unilinear causality (the concept of 'influence') in favor of an account of the work performed upon intertextual material and its functional integration in the latter text.[143]

So conceived, intertextual theory poses substantial threats to traditional exegesis. According to those aligned with Kristeva-Barthes,

> The basic force of intertextuality is to problematize, even spoil, textual boundaries—those lines of demarcation which allow a reader to talk about *the* meaning, subject, or origin of a writing. Such borders, intertextuality asserts, are never solid or stable. Texts are always spilling over into other texts.[144]

Thus, the initial exegetical task of delimiting a text is problematic. Also, the goal of "drawing out" the meaning of the text is wrongheaded, for there is no single meaning to be derived. A text, to the extent that any single text can be discussed, is polyvalent and of indeterminate meaning. Yet another threat is how the philosophical underpinnings of the method can tend to destroy all concern for authorial intent and even provoke a deep hostility to the concept of authorship.[145] Those who seek to defend the idea of authorial intent (while making room for much broader "significance" read by the audience), such as E. D. Hirsch, can be curtly dismissed as "pre-linguistic."[146]

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[143] J. Frow, "Intertextuality and Ontology," in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (previously cited), 46. Cited in Savran, "Beastly Speech: Intertextuality, Balaam's Ass and the Garden of Eden," 37.

[144]Timothy K. Beal, "Glossary," in *Reading Between Texts*, 22-23.

[145] Roland Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur," *Manteia* 5 (1968); "The Death of the Author," translated by Stephen Heath in *Image/Music/Text* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1977). See especially his revolutionary attack on the author—and God as Author too—on p. 147: "to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases—reason, science, law." In place of the so-called Author-God, Barthes asserts the role of the reader on pages 146 and 148: "We now know that the text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of an Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture. . . . [T]here is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. . . . [T]he birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." For a review of critical reaction to Barthes' proposal, especially that of Michel Foucault, see Donald E. Pease, "Author," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, second edition, eds. Frank Lentricchia, Thomas McLaughlin, 105-17 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[146] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, second ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 58. See E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); idem, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). One of the best evangelical Christian responses to post-modern claims of indeterminacy is Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (previously cited).

Those biblical scholars who prefer the model of Richard Hays have steered away from the more radical intertextuality based upon semiotic and *déconstruction* theories. There are weighty arguments that a thoroughly anti-historical approach cannot be sustained and that diachronic issues cannot be bracketed entirely.[147] Bible interpreters in the Hays tradition can characterize their intertextual studies as providing

> a bridge between strictly diachronic and strictly synchronic approaches to biblical texts, challenging traditional notions of influence and causality while at the same time affirming that every biblical text must be read as part of a larger literary context.[148]

5. The Approach Taken In This Study

As one who trained originally in the field of history and historiography at the Baccalaureate level, this student fully recognizes that he brings presuppositions to his research and writing. All of us do, and it is a conceit to pretend that our interpretation is not constrained in many ways by that pre-understanding.

> [A]ll of our judgments and inferences take place . . . against a background of beliefs. We bring to our perceptions and interpretations a world of existing knowledge, categories and judgments. Our inferences are but the visible part of an iceberg lying deep below the surface. Our realities are built up of explicit and hidden inferences.[149]

Such self-critical awareness is a prerequisite of all scholarly inquiry. Owning up to presuppositions and faith commitments is only honest. We recognize that this background makes a difference in research. So, too, do our methodological decisions. "Our

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[147] Reinhard Kuhn, a literary critic in the humanities, writes in *Corruption in Paradise* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1982), 5: "By abstracting a work from its cultural and temporal matrix an intertextual critic runs the risk of doing violence to history. The lack of constraints can lead to misreadings which totally distort the literary map. However, the intertextual approach need not be an anachronistic one."

[148] O'Day, 157.

[149] Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), 115. Cited in William J. Abraham, *Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 119.

presuppositions *and methods* shape the questions we bring to texts; and our questions inevitably influence the answers we discern there."[150]

a. Presuppositions and Methodological Decisions behind this Study

This student was reared as the son and grandson of evangelical Presbyterian pastors. That heritage of faith, his personal faith commitment, and his duties as clergy lead him to respect and interpret Ezekiel along with the rest of the Old Testament as the Church's Scripture—not to deny it to the Jewish people—and as the self-authenticating Word of God. The student will uphold the authority of the Bible in his study, without neglecting the scholarship of those who do not share his faith.

Without necessarily denying the possibility of a complex and perhaps lengthy process of composition and redaction, more and more Ezekiel scholars are proceeding in their research under the assumption that the final form is intelligible and the proper object of their study.[151] The orderly structure of the prophecy, the consistent use of certain characteristic phrases throughout the book, the pervasiveness of its theocentric orientation (both the theology and the dominance of direct divine speech), the elegant "halving" patterns which bind together large units of text, etc., all bear witness to the book's cohesiveness and unity. This student does not count himself among those competent to discern what could or could not have been spoken/written by the prophet (and must therefore be credited to an editor).

An honest review of the results of the radical text surgery performed on the book of Ezekiel over the last eighty years is enough to discourage many today from attempting further surgery. Even those scholars who employ a redaction-critical method recognize how

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[150] Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, "Literary Perspectives on Prophetic Literature," in *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present, and Future: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, eds., James Luther Mays, David L. Petersen & Kent Harold Richards, 127-43 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 131. Emphasis added.

[151] In addition to the dissertations quoted above (footnote 57), see Lawrence Boadt, "Mythological Themes and the Unity of Ezekiel," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, eds. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard, J. P. Fokkelman, 211-31 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996); and J. G. Galambush ("Ezekiel," in *Hebrew Bible: History of Interpretation*, ed. John H. Hayes, 231-37 [Nashville: Abingdon, 2004]), who writes of a late twentieth century "profusion of studies that focus on the book's unity and explore its literary technique" (234).

tenuous their work is. They themselves realize that "it is often impossible to separate what is 'authentic' from what is 'accretional'."[152] The evidence of "great subjectivism and hypothetical asseverations"[153] in scholarly work on the prophecy last century makes this student extremely wary of attempts to "get behind the text" of Ezekiel. Historical-critical arguments for doubting and reinterpreting the Babylonian provenance,[154] the book's exilic setting with the integrating dating-scheme for visions and oracles, or the authenticity of oracles of salvation, have not convinced this student.

While others carry on the discussion of such thorny issues as discriminating between the authentic and the inauthentic (or accretional),[155] and the text-critical problem of a much shorter LXX version,[156] this student will seek to interpret the recognition formulae as they appear in the Masoretic Text (MT).[157] In the chapter below providing "Details of the Formula's Usage," the text-critical divergencies between the LXX and MT will be noted

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[152] Bruce Vawter and Leslie J. Hoppe, *A New Heart: A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Edinburgh: Handsel, 1991) 10. They add, "For the most part, no attempt at separation will be made in this commentary."

[153] The phrase comes from Michael Fishbane's article, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel," *Interpretation* 38 (1984) 145-46.

[154] See Volkmar Herntrich, *Ezechielprobleme* BZAW 61 (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1932); Alfred Bertholet, and Kurt Galling, *Hezekiel*, HAT (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1936); William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986).

[155] Moshe Greenberg, "What Are Valid Criteria for Determining Inauthentic Matter in Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel and His Book*, ed. J. Lust, 123-35 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986). Greenberg concludes that "Ezekiel's utterances were sacrosanct from the time they were written down" (p. 135).

[156] Moshe Greenberg, "The Use of Ancient Versions for Interpreting the Hebrew Text: A Sampling from Ezekiel ii 1 – iii 11," in *Congress Volume, Göttingen 1977*, 131-48, VTSup 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Johan Lust, "The Use of Textual Witnesses for the Establishment of the Text, The Shorter and Longer Texts of Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel and His Book*, 7-20; Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, "Le deux rédactions conservées (LXX et TM) d'Ézéchiel 7," in *Ezekiel and His Book*, 21-47; Emanuel Tov, "Recensional Differences between the MT and LXX of Ezekiel," *ETL* 62 (1986): 89-101; Johan Lust, "Major Divergencies between LXX and MT in Ezekiel," in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered*, ed. Adrian Schenker, 83-92, SBLSCS 52 (Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

[157] Scholars regret that the Qumran finds have not benefited textual criticism of Ezekiel's prophecy to any great extent; all that are available are fragments of Hebrew texts. See William H. Brownlee, "The Scroll of Ezekiel from the Eleventh Qumran Cave," *Revue de Qumran* 4 (1963): 11-28; Johan Lust, "Ezekiel Manuscripts in Qumran: Preliminary Edition of 4Q EZa and b," in *Ezekiel and His Book*, 90-100; and George J. Brooke, "Ezekiel in Some Qumran and New Testament Texts," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress*, vol. 1, eds., Julio Trebolle Barrera, Luis Vegas Montaner, 317-37 (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

and listed, but there will be no suggested alterations of the text used as a base for this study. There will also be a listing of recognition formulae deemed secondary by Walther Zimmerli; no attempt will be made to survey more broadly the differing redaction-critical conclusions of other scholars.

In the background of this study's combination of diachronic and synchronic methods is a recent scholarly exchange between Lyle Eslinger and Benjamin Sommer, who quarreled over the relative merits of inner-biblical exegesis (which treats questions of "influence") and "inner-biblical allusion" (which, like intertextuality, is more consistently synchronic—at least in Eslinger's view).[158] Eslinger had initially questioned Fishbane's approach, as represented by the programmatic *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, and argued that all the uncertainties associated with causality (questions of influence and borrowing in a historical approach) vitiate inner-biblical exegesis. Precedence often cannot be demonstrated. Fishbane betrays a certain "literary naiveté" in his assumptions and his method, which is to be tied to a "reliance on historical-critical literary history." Eslinger urges greater caution, since "recent historical work on the Bible is increasingly pessimistic about using it as a source for writing about its own or ancient Israel's history." It is advisable, he says, to bracket historical concerns, which are "beyond verification."[159]

Benjamin Sommer wrote his dissertation under the direction of Fishbane and, quite understandably, wishes to defend inner-biblical exegesis as a valid method. Sommer, too, has shown great skill in applying the approach of inner-biblical interpretation and therefore has an interest in defending it.[160] He responds to Eslinger along several lines. (1) Eslinger

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[158] Lyle Eslinger, "Inner-biblical Exegesis and Inner-biblical Allusion: The Question of Category," *VT* 42 (1992): 47-58; Benjamin D. Sommer, "Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Lyle Eslinger," *VT* 46 (1996): 479-89. As Eslinger notes (48), he wrote an earlier article which used the rubric of inner-biblical exegesis: Lyle M. Eslinger, "Hosea 12:5a and Genesis 32:29: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis," *JSOT* 18 (1980): 91-99. Thus, Eslinger has repudiated a method he previously found useful.

[159] Eslinger, Inner-biblical Exegesis and Inner-biblical Allusion," 49, 51, 52, 58.

[160] Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998). There is not necessarily any irony in Sommer's use of the term "allusion," which was Eslinger's preference in 1992. Sommer fills the term with different meaning, and he rightly points out that Eslinger, in reality, proposes an intertextual method. "Allusion" is normally used in

himself seems tied to a certain historical-critical "orthodoxy"—Wellhausen's dating of Pentateuchal materials, the pessimism of "minimalist" historians, etc.—which leads him to disallow evidence in the text of borrowing, say, the prophets from P. (2) Inner-biblical interpretation is able to develop and apply criteria for distinguishing "between cases in which texts share vocabulary by coincidence or by their independent use of a literary tradition, on the one hand, and cases in which one author borrows vocabulary from an older text, on the other." (3) "The argument that an author alludes . . . is a cumulative one," as inner-biblical exegesis notes repeated patterns of using and re-interpreting other texts. (4) "Allusion" is not as helpful a rubric for Eslinger's method as he contends, because the term, "as used by literary critics, does posit an earlier and a later text, so that the study of allusion necessarily involves a diachronic component." (5) Eslinger's proposal that biblical scholars explore intertextuality is good, but such a purely synchronic method has its own limitations and should not be employed on its own. Diachronic approaches retain value and can be well-founded.[161]

Rather than choosing between the diachronic and synchronic (either/or), this study will employ inner-biblical interpretation and intertextuality (both/and). In some sense, the dissertation will follow Sommer's suggestion that both are worth pursuing.[162] To conclude this chapter, the student will outline the diachronic and synchronic approaches to be taken.

b. The First Focus: Inner-Biblical Interpretation and the Thesis of this Dissertation

First of all, this study proposes that Ezekiel's recognition formulae be understood according to inner-biblical interpretation as one piece in a whole complex of evidence that Ezekiel alludes to the book of Exodus in some authoritative recension. Calvin's view of the

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rightly points out that Eslinger, in reality, proposes an intertextual method. "Allusion" is normally used in literary criticism to denote an author's intention to recall to the reader's mind an earlier text. It involves diachrony.

[161] Sommer, "Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality," 483-4, 485, 486.

[162] Another who urges that both be used is Richard L. Schultz, "The Ties that Bind: Intertextuality, the Identification of Verbal Parallels, and Reading Strategies in the Book of the Twelve," in *SBL 2001 Seminar Papers*, 39-57 (Atlanta: SBL, 2001).

prophets as "eminent interpreters of Scripture" has a good measure of truth. There are indications that the prophecy of Ezekiel is literarily dependent upon some form of the book of Exodus and that the recognition formula is derived from Exodus. A connection must be made, not only with the Exodus tradition and "Exodus" as a theological motif, but also with the book of Exodus itself. The tie is certainly significant, for Ezekiel includes in his prophecy some of the most extended and profound theological reflection on the Exodus event in all the prophets. And it is the Exodus narrative, rather than a holy war tradition reflected in 1 Kings 20, rather than another of the prophets who uses the recognition formula (Isaiah, Joel), which, we propose, is the true source of the refrain for Ezekiel.

This study will argue that the prophet Ezekiel was intentionally using the Second Book of the Bible to point the exiles back to the God of the Exodus. The prophet sought to point those people who were sorrowing in a foreign country back to Yahweh, who was promising a new work of redemption in a "New Exodus." The exiles had departed to such an extent from covenant faithfulness that they, like their idolatrous forefathers in Egypt, needed a new revelation of Yahweh. This is indeed a profound thought, that the Exile and the horrors that accompanied it might serve as a fresh revelation of the same God who had delivered Israel from Egypt. That the book of Exodus was a startlingly appropriate text for the prophet to use with his hearers will hopefully become clear as the thesis is developed.

In tracing the influence of the formula's earlier usage, in Pentateuchal material[163] and in the prophets, on the formula's later usage in Ezekiel, the student will employ a certain type of diachronic method. The method will show some similarities to the traditio-historical, but will push beyond tradition-history to assert there is a "hard text" here from which the prophet drew. The extensiveness of the parallels between Ezekiel and Exodus, it will be argued, indicate that the prophet is "citing an earlier text from a fixed literary base," rather

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[163] As we will note in the chapter on "Details of the Formula's Usage," the recognition formulae are to be found in both the "J" and "P" narrative sections of Exodus. Therefore, even a late dating of "P" does not preclude the influence of Exodus narratives upon Ezekiel in his use of the recognition formulae.

than merely "using the formulae, word pairs, conventions and other lumber from the common literary storehouse"[164] stocked by earlier biblical writers.

Throughout this dissertation the student will be working on more than one level with regard to the premise that Exodus in some form is the historical and literary precedent to Ezekiel. 1) Having already argued for the credibility of that chronology and vector of influence with a review of recent scholarly literature on the dating of Exodus/P and Ezekiel, the student will 2) adduce evidence in support of the proposition that Ezekiel is broadly dependent upon Exodus/P, and 3) indicate how Ezekiel's recognition formulae are most similar in style and use to the formulae of Exodus, and then 4) press the point that Ezekiel's formulae are best interpreted in that light (i.e., as an echo of Exodus). Yes, there is some circularity in the reasoning, but it is not a vicious circularity. The recognition formula is evidence supporting a broader argument for Ezekielian dependence upon Exodus, on the one hand. On the other hand, the formula as a more specific feature should be seen as derived from Exodus—something certain critical scholars have been unwilling to grant. What the student has found is some openness at least to reconsider the dating of the Pentateuch but far less openness to inferences drawn as the result of revisionist dating. There is a reluctance to give up certain broad interpretational "gains," despite the appearance of serious flaws in methodology. Some critics still find the old architecture attractive, though the foundation appears to be breaking up.

What controls can be used in evaluating disputable vectors of influence and the likelihood of borrowing? Drawing upon a number of scholars who are writing on both testaments,[165] this student proposes to follow a list of qualifications for legitimate allusions/echoes; this list is based partially upon Richard Hays' work. The reader should look for: (1) credible chronological priority of the source text—thus Hosea's whoredom

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[164] The phrasing is that of Patrick D. Miller in his review of *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* by Michael Fishbane, *Theology Today* 44 (1987): 380.

[165] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture* (cited previously); Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel*, eds. Craig A. Evans, James A. Sanders, 79-96, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture* (cited previously).

motif or his retrospective to Israel's prior state, כימי נעוריה, "as the days of her youth," could not have been influenced by Ezekiel 16 and 23; (2) availability of an authoritative source to the author; (3) availability of the source to the original audience, if it seems that there is an expectation on the author's part that they will recognize the borrowing and find meaning in the literary relationship;[166] (4) "verbal and syntactical correspondence which goes beyond one key or uncommon term or even a series of commonly-occurring terms, also evaluating whether the expression is simply formulaic or idiomatic."[167] Additional clues for the reader would be: (5) the "volume of an echo," which Hays says "is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns," especially where "the precursor text within Scripture" is "distinctive or prominent";[168] (6) recurrent use of a smaller text unit—e.g., והיו־לי לעם ואני אהיה להם לאלהים "they will be my people and I will be their God"—which would strengthen the cumulative case that the echoing is both intentional and of importance; (7) evidence of widespread use of a particular literary corpus, such as the Holiness Code, which should alert the reader both to the possibility of finding additional allusions and to the legitimacy of terming it an allusion. Such widespread use could result in a clustering of affinities. An especially strong clue might be (8) "interpretive re-use" of another text.[169] It must be admitted that scholarship

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[166] Preachers understand that some of their sermonic quotations and echoing, e.g., a reference to the Spirit working "by and with the Word in our hearts" from Presbyterianism's Westminster Confession, may only be recognized by a very few in a listening congregation. Their intention to teach at such a point may not include their intention that each member of the congregation recognize a particular case of borrowing.

[167] Schultz, "The Ties that Bind," 44.

[168] Hays, 30.

[169] Schultz, "The Ties that Bind," 44. Milgrom provides an example of the rigorous application of this principle of inner-biblical exegesis in "Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel" (previously cited). Investigation of "interpretive re-use" dominates Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel.* Fishbane writes (285), "Aside from these few instances of *explicit* citation or referral, the vast majority of cases of aggadic exegesis in the Hebrew Bible involve *implicit* or virtual citations. In these cases, it is not by virtue of objective criteria that one may identify aggadic exegesis, but rather by a close comparison of the language of a given text with other, earlier Scriptural dicta or topoi. Where such a text (the putative *traditio*) is dominated by these dicta or topoi (the putative *traditum*), and uses them in new and transformed ways, the liklihood of aggadic exegesis is strong. In other words, the identification of aggadic exegesis where external objective criteria are lacking is proportionally increased to the extent that multiple and sustained lexical linkages between two texts can be recognized, and where the second text (the putative *traditio*) uses a segment of the first (the putative *traditum*) in a lexically reorganized and topically rethematized way."

generally, both in the humanities and in biblical studies, finds this matter of proving "influence" extraordinarily difficult, especially in individual cases (does this text allude to that one?). One can hardly ever attain certainty, say, on the order of mathematical equations.[170]

Up to this point, this study has seemed to employ the terms "allusion" and "echo" as if they were synonymous. This raises the question of definitions. A failure to define the terminology used in this dissertation to explore inner-biblical interpretation would soon cause difficulty for the writer and the reader. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines allusion, as it might be employed in everyday language, to mean "a covert, implied or indirect reference,"[171] literary criticism uses the term differently with a strongly diachronic emphasis. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* defines allusion as the "deliberate incorporation of *identifiable* elements from other sources, preceding or contemporaneous, textual or extratextual." It is said to differ "from parody and imitation in not being necessarily systematic," and "from source borrowing because it requires readers' knowledge of the original borrowed from."[172] It is clear, therefore, that "allusion" would be an unfit term to use in intertextual studies, if intertextuality is to be explored, as Eslinger intends, in a purely synchronic way without any interest in authorial intent.

This study will use the terms "allusion" and "echo" in a nearly synonymous way. "Echo" may connote a less sustained, a slightly less distinct or distinguishable reference, and, as used in this study, "echo" will normally refer to verbal parallels.[173] Allusion can

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[170] Here the student does not intend to set up a severe contrast between mathematics and literary art or to view them as incomparable. Northrop Frye writes regarding the "either mythical or mathematical" dichotomy, "It is difficult to see how aesthetic theory can get much further without recognizing the creative element in mathematics." *Anatomy of Criticism* (previously cited), 364.

[171] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, s.v. "allusion."

[172] Earl Miner, "Allusion," in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. Alex Preminger, T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Emphasis added.

[173] The definition of "echo" provided in a standard literary handbook (C. Hugh Holman, and William Harmon, eds., *A Handbook to Literature*, sixth edition [New York: Macmillan, 1992], 158) is, "A complex, subtle, and multifarious acoustic phenomenon involving a faint but perceptible repetition inside a work ('aged thrush' *echoes* 'ancient pulse' in both sound and meaning in Hardy's 'The Darkling Thrush') or between works (the 'low damp ground' in Eliot's *The Waste Land* may *echo* the 'old camp ground' of the

also be broader than the term "echo" in this study. "The words of the alluding passage may establish a conceptual rather than a verbal connection with the passage or work alluded to."[174] As this study shifts from inner-biblical interpretation to intertextuality, the term "echo" will downplay the sense of intentionality, causality, or influence (i.e., B is an echo of an earlier voice A). This dissertation rarely employs the term "quotation," for there are scarcely any examples in this literature to consider, especially if the stricter, more modern concept of quotation controls our thinking (an explicit appeal to an earlier work, incorporating its wording, with formal citation of the source).[175] Perhaps in only two places could the term "quotation" be legitimately applied; this study argues that Ezekiel 20 "quotes" material in Exodus 6 and 31. "Quotation" in these places would be defined, with Michael Fox, as "words taken from another source but used as the speaker's words."[176] Knowing the source in such cases is not absolutely necessary in order to make sense of the text (Fox contrasts this type with a second quotation-type represented in Ezekiel 12:22; 13:6; and 18:2).

This dissertation will not follow Douglas Knight and Michael Fishbane in their use of the terms *traditum* and *traditio.* The lengthy review by James Kugel of Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* warns that the Latin terminology they use to differentiate between "the passing down" and "the tradition passed down" is not so distinct, dependable, and helpful.[177] The noun *traditio* means both the process of "the handing

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sentimental tenting song)." But in literary criticism there is also such a thing as "obvious echo," which is not so easily distinguished from "allusion." See "Allusion" in *A Handbook to Literature.*

[174] Miner, "Allusion."

[175] By the term "quotation," this student is not referring to the commonly used narrative device of "quoted direct speech" within a single work (e.g., repetition in Genesis 3:17 of the divine command in 2:16-17; or the retelling of the servant's experience in Genesis 24). See George W. Savran, *Telling and Retelling: Quotation in Biblical Literature*, Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[176] Michael V. Fox, "The Identification of Quotations in Biblical Literature," *ZAW* 92 (1980): 431.

[177] James L. Kugel, review of *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, by Michael Fishbane, *Prooftexts* 7 (1987): 269-83. Kugel offers additional criticisms of Fishbane's excellent work which should be accepted: e.g., "identifying a specific kind of exegesis with its putative milieu or group" is overly speculative.

down of knowledge" and "an item of traditional knowledge, "[178] so how can it be distinguished from *traditum*, which may denote "that which is handed down"? Kugel also scores Fishbane's work for inconsistent use of the terminology he selected.

c. The Second Focus: Intertextuality and the Thesis of this Dissertation

Secondly, Ezekiel's prophecy in general and the recognition formulae more specifically can be read intertextually as "language answering language" elsewhere.[179] "Reading between texts" has the potential to enrich our literary and theological understanding of the formula in the several places or contexts where it is read (Exodus, Deuteronomy, 1 Kings, Isaiah, Joel). We may read in both directions, that is, we are permitted to read Exodus in light of Ezekiel as well as Ezekiel in light of Exodus. Perhaps an apt definition of the thesis in its second focus is: Ezekiel's recognition formula is a marker of the whole prophecy's intertextual relation to Exodus, and the two books are best read together. However, intertextual readings need not be restricted to Ezekiel and Exodus. A reading, say, between Ezekiel and Isaiah on the theme of profaning the name, is permissible, as also would be intertextual readings among Ezekiel and extra-biblical writings from the ancient world down to today. Intertextual studies encourage listening for *multiple* voices.[180] But there is need here to be more restrictive, considering the unbounded possibilities of intertextuality.[181]

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[178] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), s.v. traditio.

[179] Patrick O'Donnell, Robert Con Davis, "Introduction: Intertext and Contemporary American Fiction," in *Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction* (cited previously), xiii.

[180] Kristeva gave an interview in 1985, and her remarks were published (Margaret Waller, "An Interview with Julia Kristeva," in *Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction*, 280-94). Kristeva said (281) that in her conception of intertextuality there is more than Bakhtin's "dialogism"; there is a complex polyphony. She writes, "In the first place, there is the recognition that a textual segment, sentence, utterance, or paragraph, is not simply the intersection of two voices in direct or indirect discourse; rather, the segment is the result of the intersection of a number of voices, of a number of textual interventions, which are combined in the semantic field, but also in the syntactic and phonic fields of the explicit utterance."

[181] Culler, among others in the field of intertextuality, speaks of this as one of the "dangers that beset the notion of intertextuality: it is a difficult concept to use because of the vast and undefined discursive space it designates" (*The Pursuit of Signs*, 109). How does one deal with "an endless series of anonymous codes and citations" (111)? One reading, more limited in scope, is all that is manageable here.

Intertextuality raises many important questions and suggests many approaches to the issue of a "mutual relationship" between Ezekiel and Exodus. Additionally, intertextuality may aid scholars in understanding the phenomenon of reusing a text *within* a unified work, such as the "parallel echoing" of Ezekiel 36:27b and 37:24b.[182] A sensitivity to such intra-textuality[183] can assist the interpreter of Ezekiel's recognition formulae: one may inquire as to how, and with what result, the individual formulae echo[184] each other throughout the prophecy. Even where one does not know which text within Ezekiel has literary priority in terms of compositional history, the order provided by the canonical context (e.g., the succession of chapters) may suggest a priority for one's reading scheme.[185] For intra-textuality, one may also choose to bracket these questions and read in both directions.

This study uses a simpler and broader definition of intertextuality which a certain professor of English has suggested: "a situation in which the full meaning of a text depends on its interaction with another text."[186] There will be an attempt in the intertextuality focus to be more consistently synchronic.

Defining the method of intertextuality is perhaps an even greater challenge than defining the concept. Others, too, note the difficulty here. Patricia Tull writes,

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[182] These texts are discussed briefly in Leslie C. Allen, "Structure, Tradition and Redaction in Ezekiel's Death Valley Vision," in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, eds. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines, 127-42, JSOTSup 144 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

[183] Intra-textuality may well be defined as "the complex *self*-referentiality by which (literary) texts produce a rhetoric of meaningfulness." Charles Platter, review of *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations*, ed. by Alison Sharrock and Helen Morales, in *Religious Studies Review* 28.3 (2002): 260. Another helpful description of the phenomenon might be "internal dialogism"; this phrasing depends upon Bakhtin's thought and is used by Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, revised edition, eds. Steven L. McKenzie, Stephen R. Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 171.

[184] The function of echoing an earlier/older sacred utterance, according to Fishbane, can be quite varied: authoritative reference; reinterpretation; clarification; preservation of an authoritative memory; revitalization of what has become a "dead letter," etc. Though Fishbane intends a diachronic discussion, the same questions arise, framed a bit differently, in a consistently synchronic discussion.

[185] We note that in only two places does the prophecy deviate from a strict chronological ordering of oracles. See 29:1 and 29:17. Whether all the oracles situated between date-markers should be interpreted as being delivered together is an open question.

[186] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 361.

> Like many other concepts in biblical interpretation, intertextuality is more helpful in providing an angle of vision on the nature of biblical texts than in prescribing a precise set of procedures for producing an interpretation. Attention to intertextuality and rhetoric calls forth certain ways of posing questions, and benefits from both imagination and disciplined analytical skills.[187]

The intertextual method in this study will build upon the understanding of the nature of texts developed by Bakhtin, Kristeva, and especially T. S. Eliot in his early essays on criticism: "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), and "The Function of Criticism" (1923).[188] Though this student has known the "influence" (ironically!) of some poststructuralist criticism, his practice of intertextual reading downplays, rather than rebels against, diachronic concerns and the traditional ideas of the author, authority, literary "genealogy," authorial intent, influence, etc. It is an intertextuality which still seeks meaning in the texts,

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[187] Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," 166. Carol Newsom makes a very similar point in her discussion of "Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth," *JR* 76.2 (1996): 290-306. She writes, "Bakhtin's approach is not a method to be applied so much as it is a perception about the nature of discourse and a provocative claim about what it takes to articulate the 'truth' of an idea. Its nonsystematic, nonabstract, nonreductive emphasis on unmerged voices in the text answers the biblical scholar's concern for respecting the variety and particularity of the Bible. The Bakhtinian emphasis on the *idea* in all its interactions challenges the tendency of biblical studies to let historical particularity isolate the text from substantive engagement with other discourses." ("Bakhtin, the Bible, and Dialogic Truth," 306).

[188] T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, new edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950), 3-11 and 12-22. Amazingly, a short time before this student began researching intertextuality for this dissertation, his wife (a lecturer in English Composition) borrowed Eliot's volume of essays from the public library for her own reading purposes. She did not dream that her husband would be at all interested in her book. This student began reading Eliot one evening as a diversion from his doctoral thesis. What surprised him later, as he read Bakhtin, Kristeva, Aichele, and others, is how Eliot anticipated so many of the insights and concerns of intertextuality, without partaking of any post-modernism. Eliot conceived of literature as a totality, as an organic whole, "a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written" (7), of which every writer and reader partakes. He wrote in 1923: "I thought of literature . . . of the literature of the world, of the literature of Europe, of the literature of a single country, not as a collection of the writings of individuals, but as 'organic wholes', as systems in relation to which, and only in relation to which, individual works of literary art, and the works of individual artists, have their significance." (pp. 12-13).

Because every writer and reader partakes of one great tradition, "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead" (1919, p. 4). Past writers live on and assert themselves in the literary works of the one following after them. When we read the poetry of their successor, "we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (1919, p. 4). The individual is not to fight this relation to the tradition, but surrender: "What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality" (1919, pp. 6-7). Is this something like the death of the author (not Barthes' practical murder, but rather self-sacrifice)? With regard to the whole tradition of literature, artists may be "conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living" (1919, p. 11). We may add that it lives in them and lives through them as they relate to it.

together, without deconstructing either the texts or the whole model of communication (with all acts of communication). Intertextuality as a postmodernist[189] polemic in semiotic literary theory is rejected.

This study will examine mutual relationships (and "dialogue") between texts while making use of a suggestive list of verbs, produced by Michael Baxandall, which may define and describe the relationships among works of art (either diachronically or synchronically). In its relation to another, one work can

> draw on, resort to, avail oneself of, appropriate from, have recourse to, adapt, misunderstand, refer to, pick up, take on, engage with, react to, quote, differentiate oneself from, assimilate oneself to, assimilate, align oneself with, copy, address, paraphrase, absorb, make a variation on, revive, continue, remodel, ape, emulate, travesty, parody, extract from, distort, attend to, resist, simplify, reconstitute, elaborate on, develop, face up to, master, subvert, perpetuate, reduce, promote, respond to, transform, tackle. . . . Everyone will be able to think of others.[190]

Verbs this student may add include evoke and revoke, convert and invert, reinterpret and reapply, recontextualize, reframe; there are other textual relationships suggested by Michael Fishbane and listed above (footnote 184).

Alongside the assertion of more traditionally-styled exegesis, that there is meaning in the text, discoverable meaning which was "authored" by the writer, which requires the interpretation of the reader, there is another common-sense assertion to make. Texts may generate still more meaning in their fuller canonical context, as they are read with other texts. The whole may properly be said to be greater than the mere sum of its parts. Just as more "music" is heard as the various instruments of an orchestra play their parts, so much more is heard as texts interact. There are amazing complexities and there are beautiful harmonies as one hears musical instruments or the voice-parts of a choir or texts playing together. We think of the dynamics of "contrapunctus/counterpoint" in J. S. Bach or the use of descants in sacred choral music, and we can easily draw analogies with "reading between texts." In

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[189] David J. A. Clines will speak of "a central issue for postmodernism—the indeterminacy of texts and the plurality of meanings." *On the Way to the Postmodern, Old Testament Essays, 1967–1998,* Volume 1, JSOTSup 292 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), xvi.

[190] Michael Baxandall, "Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality," in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (cited previously). Quoted by Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," 169.

the intertextual focus of this dissertation, the student will listen for what musicians call "consonances," which may seem "perfect" or "imperfect" (and needing perfect resolution).[191]

This study will seek to avoid a pitfall which has characterized numerous intertextual studies of late. Some who have latched on to "trendy intertextuality" display something akin to flippancy in their selection of intertexts. The only principle which appears to govern the selection of the intertext(s) is the reader's whim. This dissertation assumes that a text may, itself, provide direction to the reader in selecting the intertext(s). A text may include "specific signals" or "markers," which point "to the particular intertexts which the reader is expected to include when reading a book."[192] It is possible to investigate the markers and to pursue these textual relations in a more text-centered than author-centered approach. Quite obviously, an author-centered approach could not permit any consideration of reading an earlier text in light of a later text—unless the interpreter believes the Bible's self-testimony that all Scripture is θεοπνευστος and that the Spirit of God is the ultimate author of both.[193]

Patricia Tull has urged that scholarship press beyond the initial questions, "Is there, can there be, an echo of another text here?" There is need to ask "what such a recollection of memory might be intended to convey."

> What does it do? What does it mean to invoke previous speech, to recollect it, reformulate it, react against it, reinterpret it, and resurrect it as new speech? These

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[191] Oliver B. Ellsworth, "Contrapunctus," and Kurt-Jürgn Sachs and Carl Dahlhaus, "Counterpoint," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, vol. 6, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove [Macmillan], 2001).

[192] Kirsten Nielsen, "Intertextuality and Hebrew Bible," in *Congress Volume, Oslo 1998* (previously cited), 19. She writes, further, about "exegesis as a *response* to texts": "responsible exegesis presumes that the exegete can point out the markers in the text on which the intertexts have been chosen" (31).

[193] More than once, John Calvin explained apparent contradictions in the Bible or Bible-writers' apparent misinterpretations of earlier texts by insisting that the Holy Spirit had the rights of authorship, that is, to rework his previous literary creations. (See, e.g., Calvin's commentary on 1 Cor. 2:9.) One need not be a "fundamentalist" to emphasize "the role of the Holy Spirit in constantly bringing to fresh light the written scriptures as a divinely spoken Word." Brevard S. Childs, "The Canon in Recent Biblical Studies," *Pro Ecclesia* 14.1 (2005): 34.

> are questions that begin to get at the heart of the significance of speech that is shared among writers of the Bible.[194]

More synchronically, what does it mean that these texts can be read together? What does it mean to read them separately, that is, what might be lost as a consequence of separation? How do the texts interact and react? What do they do to each other? The goal of both the inner-biblical interpretation and the intertextuality foci in this study of Ezekiel's recognition formulae is to press beyond the recognition of the phenomena (inner-biblical interpretation and intertextual relations) and assess how and why the texts speak together or to each other. Together with the questions of *dependence* brought forward by inner-biblical interpretation, we may ask about an inner-biblical *inter-dependence* of texts.

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[194] Patricia K. Tull, "The Rhetoric of Recollection," in *Congress Volume, Oslo 1998* (previously cited), 78.

CHAPTER 2
PAST SCHOLARSHIP ON EZEKIEL'S FORMULA

As was mentioned in the introduction, the scholarly discussion of Ezekiel's recognition formula has been typically oblique, occasional, or subordinate to other interests. This chapter will offer a survey of scholarship, which will be divided into four parts. There will be a selective review of (1) scholarship prior to Zimmerli, dating from the time of the Protestant Reformation;[1] (2) the contributions of Walther Zimmerli in his journal articles and BKAT; and (3) the recent scholarship which has built upon Zimmerli's work. (4) A concluding section analyzes the various perspectives and conclusions which were reviewed in order to draw out the similarities and differences among scholars on the more important interpretive issues. It will also indicate how this research of the recognition formula attempts to build upon, and extend beyond, past scholarship. No attempt will be made to survey Ezekiel scholarship generally; others have capably done so already and can be consulted.[2]

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[1] It has not been feasible to research the contributions of the Church Fathers or the Medieval commentators. The three major works of the Early Church are: Origène, *Homélies sur Ézéchiel: Texte Latin, Introduction, Traduction et Notes par Marcel Borret*, Sources Chrétiennes 352 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1989); *Hieronymus, Commentariorum in Hiezechielem*, Hg. F. Glorie, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 75, 75A (Turnholti: Brepols, 1964); and Gregory I, *Homélies sur Ézéchiel: Texte Latin, Introduction, Traduction et Notes par Charles Morel*, Sources Chrétiennes 327, 360 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986-). For a large-scale study providing many leads into ancient Christian commentary (e.g., Origen, St. Jerome, Pope Gregory I), see Stephan Ch. Kessler, *Gregor der Große als Exeget: Eine theologische Interpretation der Ezechiel-homilien*, Innsbrucker theologische Studien 43 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1995). Another aid to the researcher would be Charles Kannengiesser (ed.), *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 2 vols., (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004). Also beyond the scope of this dissertation is a review of ancient Jewish exegesis and interpretation. Those wishing to pursue that field of research may consult Moshe Eisemann, *Yechezkel/The Book of Ezekiel: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources*, 3 vols., ArtScroll [*sic*] Tanach Series (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1980).

[2] Curt Kuhl, "Zur Geschichte der Hesekiel-Forschung," *Theologische Rundschau, Neue Folge* 5 (1933): 92-118; William A. Irwin, *The Problem of Ezekiel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), 3-30; Michael J. Gruenthaner, "Recent Theories about Ezechiel," *CBQ* 7 (1945): 438-46; Robert Gordis, "The Book of Ezekiel in Contemporary Criticism," *The Jewish Review* 4 (1946): 57-77; Curt Kuhl, "Neuere Hesekiel-Literatur," *Theologische Rundschau, Neue Folge* 20 (1952): 1-26; William A. Irwin, "Ezekiel Research Since 1943," *VT* 3 (1953): 54-66; H. H. Rowley, "The Book of Ezekiel in Modern

A. Scholarship Prior to Zimmerli

1. JOHN CALVIN

It is regrettable that Calvin was unable to complete his 1564 lectures on Ezekiel, which end at chapter twenty.[3] When he does expound a passage which includes the refrain, the Reformer produces some excellent theological insights. His interest seems to be almost entirely theological, and there is little reflection on those rhetorical and literary issues which so interest modern exegetes.[4] He fails to discuss the purpose behind Ezekiel's constant repetition of the formula, except to say that "the Prophet repeats it so often . . . because the Jews were intractable and derided all God's threats" (*ad* 17:21).[5]

Study," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 36 (1953-4): 146-90; Herbert G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel, Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 6 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), 41-5; Moshe Greenberg, "Prolegomenon," in *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy and Critical Articles by Shalom Spiegel and C. C. Torrey*, ed. Moshe Greenberg (New York: KTAV, 1970), xi-xxxv; Keith W. Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets*, Studies in Biblical Theology 31 (Naperville, Illinois: Alec Allenson, 1974); Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 355-70; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1, Chapters 1–24*, 3-8; idem, *Ezekiel 2, Chapters 25–48*, xi-xviii; Bernhard Lang, *Ezechiel: Der Prophet und das Buch*, Erträge der Forschung 153 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981); Jon D. Levenson, "Ezekiel in the Perspective of Two Commentators," *Interpretation* 38.2 (1984): 210-17; William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986), xix-xxiii; Paul Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel*, JSOTSup 51 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 21-31; Lawrence Boadt, "Ezekiel, Book of," *ABD*, 2:711-22; Henry McKeating, *Ezekiel*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1993); Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, "Ezekiel among the Critics," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 2 (1994): 9-24; Udo Feist, *Ezechiel: Das literarische Problem des Buches forschungsgeschichtlich betrachtet*, BWANT 138 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995); Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)," in *The Hebrew Bible Today: An Introduction to Critical Issues*, eds. Steven L. McKenzie and M. Patrick Graham (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 88-94; Risa Levitt Kohn, "Ezekiel at the Turn of the Century," *Currents in Biblical Research* 2 (2003): 9-31; Julie G. Galambush, "Ezekiel," in *Hebrew Bible: History of Interpretation*, 231-7 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004). Among these, Rowley, Greenberg, Childs, Zimmerli, Darr, Levitt Kohn, and Galambush are most highly recommended.

[3] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. Thomas Myers, 2 Vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981). The first volume of a new English translation of the Reformer's commentary has been published: *Ezekiel 1, Chapters 1–12*, trans. Donald Martin and David Foxgrover (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). The 1981 reprint of the Calvin Translation Society edition (*circa* 1850) is used here because it is complete. The original Latin, "Praelectiones in Ezechielis Prophetae, Viginti Capita Priora," can be located in volume 68 of *Corpus Reformatorum*, eds. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, Eduardus Reuss (Brunsvigae/Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1889).

[4] A similar conclusion was reached by Louise Pettibone Smith, "Calvin as Interpreter of Ezekiel," in the *Festschrift* for George Livingstone Robinson, *From the Pyramids to Paul: Studies in Theology, Archeology, and Related Subjects*, ed. Lewis Gaston Leary, 267-81 (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1935).

[5] Similar remarks on the "prolix" and repetitious style of Ezekiel, as fitted to an unyielding audience, can be found in the commentary *ad* 1:20 and 3:10. Calvin may betray some slight impatience with Ezekiel's literary style in his lecture *ad* 3:10: "This is a repetition of the same doctrine; for we said that our

Though Calvin received an excellent classical liberal education involving studies in rhetoric, he concentrates more on God's message than on the shape that message took as the prophet impressed it upon the exiles. Because Calvin's expositions were always selective and suggestive rather than exhaustive, occurrences of the refrain in succeeding chapters did not receive the same attention as the first occurrences in chapters six and seven. Calvin passes right over some (e.g., 7:27; 13:9, 24; 20:20).

Calvin argues that God's claim or declaration, "I am Yahweh," was mainly meant to confirm the authority of the teaching given by his servant, Ezekiel (*ad* 6:7). A paraphrase of the formula, offered in his comments on 6:14, points to Calvin's chief interpretation: "that is, they shall know that I have spoken by My prophets." The underlying thought is that Israel "denied that God was God as often as they withdrew their confidence from the teaching of the holy man" (*ad* 7:4).[6] To answer his sinful people, Yahweh, in the oft repeated formula, "inscribes His name on His word, that they may know that He had spoken, and may experience the effect of His words by His hand" (*ad* 14:9).

The refrain was also a prophecy that God's people would learn from experience, they would be compelled to feel, that God was just (*ad* 6:13). They would feel him to be their God when he began to "instruct them by scourges" (*ad* 16:62). Their experience would compel the people to acknowledge God as a judge (cf. the commentary on 20:26 and 38). In explaining a passage which includes the formula and a promise of restoration, Calvin wrote that the people would really feel Yahweh to be God,

> . . . because He stood firm to His promises, although through the fault of man His covenant had fallen to pieces and become invalid. . . . [T]he Jews should know that they were dealing with God, because they could not take away what God was then promising (*ad* 16:62).

Prophet is more verbose than Isaiah, and even than Jeremiah, because he had accustomed himself to the form of speech which was then customary among the exiles. He is not, therefore, either so restricted or so polished; but we must understand that he accommodated his language to learners, because he had to do with a people not only rude and dull, but also obstinate."

[6] Walther Zimmerli, expounding Ezekiel 2:4 and 33:33, would later make a similar point about the interconnection between God and His prophetic spokesmen: "Since Yahweh's actions are never isolated from the proclaiming word of the prophet, recognition and acknowledgment of Yahweh will always include recognition and acknowledgment of the prophet, the person so inseparable from the word event itself." *I Am Yahweh*, 90.

Several times he emphasized that this knowledge of the LORD would be "experimental" or experiential because they had rejected a knowledge of God which comes from heeding his word (*ad* 11:11; 12:15, 20).

Calvin's influence on Reformed Bible scholars lasts to this day, especially his emphasis on covenant. Though the Reformer does not trace the formula back to its first appearance in Exodus, his covenantal interpretation of the formula and the related self-introductory statement,[7] "I am Yahweh" or "I am Yahweh your God," seems quite sound and tends to direct the Bible student to the book of Exodus. Calvin's stress on covenant, particularly throughout his exposition of chapter twenty, may provide a key to understanding Ezekiel's prophecy. God intervenes to reveal himself as Yahweh again, sending judgment and speaking words of grace, because he has bound himself and his people together in covenant. Calvin explains (*ad* 20:6):

> . . .God raised His hand to sanction the covenant which He had made; for when He pronounces Himself their God, He binds them to Himself, and claims them for His peculiar people, and thus confirms His covenant.

It may be argued that biblical scholarship today would have a clearer understanding of Ezekiel, had more in the guild followed the lead of Calvin.

2. CARL FRIEDRICH KEIL

The commentary of C. F. Keil (1882) viewed the recognition formula as pointing to a "peculiarity of Ezekiel's style of prophecy, namely, the marked prominence assigned to the divine origin and contents of his announcements."[8] In his reverent treatment of the book, Keil also notes that the language of Ezekiel "shows a strong leaning towards the diction of the Pentateuch."[9] While his language reveals great originality of mind, it "cannot hide the

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[7] There are several other commonly used scholarly terms for this refrain, such as "divine self-predication formula," *"Imponierformel," "Hoheitsformel,"* "self-presentation formula," and "formulaic phrase of self-introduction," the latter two being translations of Zimmerli's *"Selbstvorstellungsformel."*

[8] C. F. Keil, *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, trans. James Martin, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986 reprint) 1: 12-13.

[9] Ibid, vol. 1: 16. It is interesting to note that even the more liberal scholars of the mid-nineteenth century—i.e., prior to Wellhausen's revolutionary work—believed that Ezekiel drew heavily from the Pentateuch. Ewald's statement that Ezekiel "makes use of the Pentateuch as a matter of pure learning" and certainly without genuine "prophetic originality and independence" is representative. Ewald is cited in

fact of its dependence on ancient models, especially on the language of the Pentateuch."[10] One could wish that Keil had then proceeded to point out the similarities between Ezekiel and Pentateuchal materials, and particularly between the formula's use in Ezekiel and Exodus. He does not.

Keil understands the formula as a prophecy that, in the future judgment, the people of Israel will recognize Yahweh as the omnipotent God and convert to him (*ad loc* 6:7). He does not reflect deeply on the theological import of the formula, and often ignores it in his exegesis. Once simply explained, the formula demands little discussion thereafter. Keil believes that the name Yahweh is significant and that its use indicates that God is the unchangeably true One (*ad loc* 16:62). With regard to the prophecies that the various nations "shall know that I am Yahweh," Keil argues that this does not mean they will come to the knowledge of God in salvation. Referring to Ezekiel 25:14, Keil understands the formula in those contexts "as signifying that these nations will discern in their destruction the punitive righteousness of God, so that it presents no prospect of future salvation."[11] This question of whether or not Ezekiel's recognition formulae, with the nations as the subject, have in view the nations' inclusion in the covenant blessings continues to generate discussion today.

Keil appears not to have found the formulaic and repetitious style of Ezekiel to his liking. There is a rather negative assessment of "anomalies" in his prophecy, including the recognition formula, which, he judges, "betray the decline and approaching ruin of the Hebrew language."[12] To Ezekiel scholars today this characterization seems unduly harsh and unfortunately expressed.

Wilhelm Julius Schröder, *Lange's Commentary: The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. and ed. Patrick Fairbairn, William Findlay, Thomas Crerar, and Sinclair Manson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 21.

[10] Karl Friedrich Keil, *Manual of Historico-Critical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, trans. George C. M. Douglas (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), 356.

[11] Keil, *The Prophecies*, 1: 358.

[12] Keil, *Manual*, vol. 1, 356.

3. ANDREW B. DAVIDSON

The leading English-language work of its day, A. B. Davidson's commentary for the Cambridge Bible series (1892) was counted valuable by scholars well into the twentieth century, despite the fact that it appeared before the advent of form criticism.[13] He believed that the recognition formula deserved special notice and should not be passed over lightly due to its formulaic, allegedly stereotyped appearances in the prophecy.

> This oft-repeated phrase is not a mere formula. The prophet's idea is that God does all, brings all calamities, causes all catastrophes and revolutions in States, and guides the fortunes of Israel in the sight of the nations, with one great design in view—to make Himself, the true and only God, known to all mankind.[14]

Davidson also suggests that in the refrain God, "expresses his own consciousness of that which he is by using his own name."[15] In other words, the use of the name communicates the true nature of the one who bears the name. In the refrain,

> The words mean more than that those addressed shall learn that it is "Jehovah" who inflicts the judgment or confers the blessing upon them; they mean that they shall learn to know the nature of Him who is dealing with them, or at least his nature on some side of his being.[16]

Ezekiel scholarship continued with a predominantly conservative cast to the end of the nineteenth century, and though there were radical proposals from some,[17] most would have agreed with the assessment of Davidson's commentary with regard to compositional history:

> The Book of Ezekiel is simpler and more perspicuous in its arrangement than any other of the great prophetical books. It was probably committed to writing late in the

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[13] Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Books for Pastor & Teacher* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 78.

[14] A. B. Davidson, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, with Notes and Introduction*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892), 210. Davidson is quoted approvingly at this point in Solomon Fisch, *Ezekiel, Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary*, Soncino Books of the Bible, ed. A Cohen (London: Soncino, 1950), 195.

[15] Ibid., xxxiii. Similar phrasing can be found on p. xxxviii.

[16] Ibid., xxxviii.

[17] L. C. F. W. Seinecke argued that the prophecy was best interpreted as a second century pseudepigraph in his work, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1876-84). See the discussion of C. C. Torrey below for a later version of the pseudepigraphal theory. Torrey reveals no acquaintance with Seinecke.

> prophet's life, and, unlike the prophecies of Isaiah, which were given out piecemeal, was issued in its complete form at once.[18]

4. THE "HYPER-CRITICISM" OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

With the dawn of a new century, Ezekiel scholarship took a new, more critical look at the prophecy. Johannes Herrmann (1908) proved to be the precursor of later radical scholarship with his position denying the complete literary unity of Ezekiel. Herrmann said the prophecy was substantially the product of the sixth century Ezekiel, but that there was also evidence of later editorial expansion.[19] The recognition formula, thought to be easily detached from surrounding material, was often to be taken as an indicator of redactional activity. Especially, Herrmann excluded those formulae set in passages promising restoration, since he believed Ezekiel's original book included only prophecies of doom. It is accurate to say that he regarded a majority of the occurrences of the refrain to be secondary. From this time forward, a dismissive attitude toward the recognition formula was a corollary of more radical literary criticism.

There followed after Herrmann a period characterized chiefly by the "unrestrained hyper-criticism" (*überstürzende Hyperkritik*)[20] of men like Gustav Hölscher and C. C. Torrey. It was little short of a revolution by Cooke's reckoning.[21] Hölscher's 1924 work[22]

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[18] Davidson, ix. One may supplement this statement with others. Rudolf Smend warned against any criticism which would disintegrate the prophecy: "man könnte kein Stück herausnehmen, ohne das ganze Ensemble zu zerstören . . . Höchst wahrscheinlich ist das ganze Buch deshalb auch in einem Zuge niedergeschrieben . . ." (*Der Prophet Ezechiel*, second ed. [Leipzig: Verlag S. Hirzel, 1880], xxi-xxii). Henry A. Redpath wrote, "Scarcely any doubt has ever been cast even by the extremest critic upon the unity and authenticity of the book, though a few glosses and interpretive words or notes may have found their way into the text" (*The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* [London: Methuen, 1907], xiv). Driver claimed, "No critical question arises in connection with the authorship of the book, the whole from beginning to end bearing unmistakably the stamp of a single mind" (*Introduction*, 279). Even stronger was the claim of George Buchanan Gray: "no other book of the Old Testament is distinguished by such decisive marks of unity of authorship and integrity as this" (*Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* [London: Duckworth, 1913], 198).

[19] Johannes Herrmann, *Ezechielstudien*, (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908); idem, *Ezechiel*, Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1924). It is possible to detect in Herrmann a shift over time toward a much more severe criticism of Ezekiel's prophecy.

[20] The phrase is that of Walther Zimmerli in *Ezekiel 1*, p. 7 [*Ezechiel*, Biblischer Kommentar XIII/1, 11*].

[21] G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), writes, "In recent years the study of Ezekiel has undergone something of a

proposed that "the authentic Ezekiel" was essentially a poet, fond of the קִינָה 3+2 rhythm, and that nearly all non-poetic material ought not to be attributed to him. (The main basis for this conclusion was *religionsgeschichtlich* research, likening Israelite prophecy to prophetic phenomena in other Ancient Near Eastern cultures.) Since little of the prophecy takes poetic form, Ezekiel is credited with fewer than 145 out of 1,273 total verses.[23] The disassembly of the text brings to mind the witty comment of Duhm, who remarked that Marti's commentary on Habakkuk (which found a mere seven verses to be genuine) dealt with the book as cruelly "als Jahve in Hab 3 13 mit dem Haus des Frevlers."[24] As might be predicted, too, all the passages which include the recognition formula are clipped by Hölscher. There seemed to be little reason to search for meaning and purpose in accretionary material.

5. CHARLES CUTLER TORREY

C. C. Torrey made the pseudepigraphical theory a more mainstream opinion in pre-World War II scholarship. His 1930 monograph, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy*,[25] insisted that the original prophecy was a very late work, purporting to come

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revolution . . . It is no longer possible to treat the Book as the product of a single mind and a single age" (p. v).

[22] Gustav Hölscher, *Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch* (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1924). This conclusion regarding Ezekiel's mode of communication is fully in line with his overall view of ancient Hebrew prophecy as set forth in *Die Profeten: Untersuchung zur Religionsgeschichte Israels* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1914). He believed the prophets were given over to ecstasies, hypnotic visions, etc., which resulted in the use of heightened language to make known their experiences of the paranormal.

[23] The scholarship is divided on exactly the count of verses, in whole or in part, Hölscher allowed Ezekiel. Zimmerli gives the number 144 from his reading of Hölscher's work (*Ezekiel 1*, p. 5), while Joyce reports a more generous 170 (*Divine Initiative*, 23). Cf. also Eißfeldt, 369. This student calculated a few less than Zimmerli; the lower end numbers appear more correct.

[24] B. Duhm, "Vorwort," in *Das Buch Habakuk, Text, Übersetzung und Erklärung* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1906), cited in Donald Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 215.

[25] This significant work was first published by Yale University Press in 1930. Indicative of its influence in the history of Ezekiel studies, though not its wide acceptance, is KTAV's reprinting of the work with a fine prolegomenon by Moshe Greenberg. That 1970 reprint also includes the response of Shalom Spiegel, "Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel," *Harvard Theological Review* 24 (1931) 245-321, and Torrey's rejoinder, "Certainly Pseudo-Ezekiel," *JBL* 53 (1934) 291-320. We here note the last word on the subject from Spiegel: "Toward Certainty in Ezekiel," *JBL* 54 (1935): 145-71. Greenberg's interest in Torrey's theory, which he rejects, may be explained in part by an appreciation for Torrey's arguments

from the mid-seventh century (Manasseh's reign) but dating from the Hellenistic period. A redactor was responsible for reworking the prophecy into its present form, with a setting in the Babylonian exile.

Torrey's reasons for such a late dating of Ezekiel are fascinating and have some bearing upon the argument of this study. He stamps the prophecy as one of the very latest of the Old Testament writings because "the author of the work, as its interpreters have long observed, is a man of many books, one who *has at his disposal a library of sacred literature*, and habitually shows acquaintance with it."[26] Building upon the doctoral work of his student, Millar Burrows, and cleverly using conservative scholarship to bolster his argument, Torrey boldly asserts,

> The plain fact, as one day will be generally recognized, is that the author of the book had before him the completed Pentateuch, in the very form in which it lies before us at the present day.[27]

Ezekiel was always looking back to the "former days" (38:17), and, Torrey says, "in almost every case . . . in which the fact of borrowing can be surely demonstrated, it is evident that Ezekiel is the debtor."[28] The conservative today is likely to contend that

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regarding Ezekielian use of earlier Scriptures. It is worth noting, too, that the pseudepigraphal theory was revived by Hermann Schulz, *Das Todesrecht im Alten Testament*, BZAW 114 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1969); and Joachim Becker, "Erwägungen zur ezechielischen Frage," in *Künder des Wortes: Beiträge zur Theologie der Propheten*, eds. L. Ruppert, P. Weimar, and E. Zenger, (Würzburg: Echter, 1982), 137-50. Schulz's and Becker's theory differs from Torrey in their earlier, Persian-era dating. Zimmerli answered the whole lot of writers who suggest "pseudo" or "deutero" theories with a strongly-worded "Nein" in his article, "Deutero-Ezechiel?" *ZAW* 84 (1972): 501-16.

[26] Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy*, 90. Emphasis added. Here Torrey is certainly echoing the earlier conclusions of his student, Millar Burrows, who found evidence that Ezekiel is continually quoting or alluding to other Scriptures. There is borrowing, not only from pre-exilic literature (J/E, Hosea, First Isaiah, and Jeremiah), but also from allegedly exilic or post-exilic works such as the Holiness Code, Priestly Document, etc. Burrows writes, "His use of works of earlier authors is not confined to any one or two ways of using them; on the contrary, every conceivable form of literary dependence, short of downright transcription, can be illustrated from his pages." (*The Literary Relations of Ezekiel* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1925], 13-14.)

[27] Ibid., 91. Cf. Burrows, who holds that Ezekiel "knew the Pentateuch in approximately its present form" (68). In the context of his own argument, Torrey cites J. Oscar Boyd, "Ezekiel and the Modern Dating of the Pentateuch," *Princeton Theological Review* 6 (1908): 29-51. Boyd had argued that Ezekiel's widespread use of Pentateuchal materials in the first quarter of the sixth century showed that the Five Books of Moses could not be as late as Wellhausen and other "negative critics" had proposed. The final form of the Pentateuch was not post-exilic, but pre-exilic, and Ezekiel could prophesy under its influence. By contrast, Torrey would date the Pentateuch late, i.e., to the post-exilic era, *and* argue for full Pentateuchal influence upon Ezekiel. The prophecy in purporting to be exilic, therefore, was inauthentic (Pseudo-Ezekiel).

[28] Ibid., 93.

Torrey's appraisal of the situation of literary priority and borrowing was correct, but his explanation of it was erroneous.[29]

One may summarize that the period of radical criticism during the first half of the last century tended to encourage a dismissive attitude toward the recognition formula and, indeed, toward Ezekiel's prophecy as a whole. During the 1940s, however, two notable explanations of the formula appeared which may have served to spur on further work. Both would be cited in Zimmerli's works.

6. SHELDON H. BLANK

In a lengthy article for the 1940 *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Sheldon H. Blank treats both the Isaianic short statement of self-predication, "I am Yahweh," and the recognition formula (found in Isaiah 45:3; 49:23, 26; 60:16). Regarding the latter, he claims to be able to trace the "gradual growth of this formula" in the writings of the so-called Deutero-Isaiah.[30]

Blank places great emphasis on the "counterpart to the formula" in Isaiah 41:23, where Yahweh directly challenges the gods of the nations to prove themselves.

> . . . Declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so that we may know that you are gods.

Reflecting on this verse, Blank says, "We could not ask for a more explicit clarification of the formula וידעו כי אני יהוה."[31] Also "most explicit as to the meaning of the formula" is Isaiah 40:28.

> Do you not know? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

These verses among others are the evidence which he adduces in explaining the expression אני יהוה to mean "I am God" or "I am the sole deity." In brief, Blank fits both the recognition formula and the short statement אני יהוה into Isaiah's developed argument

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[29] I am indebted to my brother, Professor William B. Evans, for this characterization.

[30] Sheldon H. Blank, "Studies in Deutero-Isaiah," *HUCA* 15 (1940): 13.

[31] Ibid, 14.

for monotheism (based on Yahweh's unique ability to prophesy future events). Valid points are made in exegeting those passages in which אלהים or אל seem to be equivalent to and interchangeable with יהוה.

Blank is careful to note, however, that "the phrase אני יהוה also occurs in Deutero-Isaiah *without* monotheistic implications."[32] At points, Yahweh is clearly used as a proper noun, as in 42:8 where the divine speaker is identifying himself by name. (And Blank sagely associates this usage with both Exodus 6 and Ezekiel 20.) This double significance that the formula אני יהוה has in Deutero-Isaiah—meaning "I am God alone" in some cases and "I am Yahweh" in others—does not invalidate his conclusions, Blank contends. Instead, the two-fold usage "contributes to an understanding of the full import of the argument from prophecy."[33] He writes,

> That Deutero-Isaiah identifies Him in whose name he speaks now as Yahveh, Israel's God, and now as God, the One, comports absolutely with that argument. The argument is bent upon proving just this: that Yahveh is God—that Yahveh and God are identical. Deutero-Isaiah's universalism throughout is combined with the contention that, between Israel and the one God, a special relationship exists. It is Israel's god, Yahveh, not the god addressed by any other nation, who is God—as Deutero-Isaiah proves to his satisfaction, with his argument through prophecy.[34]

But all this material has to do with Isaiah; what is the significance of Blank's article for Ezekiel studies?

In an eight page appendix to his study, Blank examines the recognition formula in the book of Ezekiel and comes to the conclusion that "the words אני יהוה in the formula וידעו כי אני יהוה seem to have a meaning identical with that which they have in the Deutero-Isaianic formulation, and to mean: 'I am God.'"[35] This conclusion is supported with five arguments:

(1) There is a link between the recognition formula and an expression which occurs twice in Ezekiel (2:5; 33:33): וידעו כי נביא היה בתוכם. Because the prophet's role was to be a spokesman of Yahweh, often prophesying future events, the credibility of the

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[32] Ibid, 17.

[33] Ibid, 18.

[34] Ibid, 18.

[35] Ibid, 35.

prophet and his God were of one piece. When the prophet announced an event in advance, it produced the conviction, not only that Yahweh could reveal his intentions to his servants, but also that Yahweh had the power to effect his will. Yahweh would do this because, as in Deutero-Isaiah's argument, he is God.

(2) Another common formula in Ezekiel: אני יהוה דברתי, "It is I, Yahweh, who have spoken," is also connected to the recognition formula and, Blank says, "is the basic formulation of which the formula וידעו כי אני יהוה is a development."[36] This formula, antecedent to the recognition formula, is regarded as a divine seal, stamping the threat or promise to which it is connected as Yahweh's words. And if they are fulfilled, Yahweh is to be believed as God, the one true God. Thus, this formula "points to reasoning similar to that in Deutero-Isaiah's argument" for monotheism.[37]

(3) Blank is convinced that the combining of the recognition formula with the formula אני יהוה דברתי in several locations (6:10; 17:21, 24; 36:36; 37:14) strengthens the argument. The full meaning of the formula, with all its implications spelled out, is, "They shall know that I (Yahveh, the speaker, the God of Israel, who make my intentions known in advance through my prophets) am God."[38] So, Blank contends, אני יהוה in Deutero-Isaiah and in Ezekiel has the same import.

(4) Since the nations are said to recognize Yahweh, and the knowledge of *Yahweh as God of Israel* is too obvious a lesson to learn, Ezekiel's recognition formula demands the interpretation that Yahweh will be acknowledged as the sole deity, the God the nations too must honor.

(5) In the final argument, which is rather tenuous and difficult to follow, Blank suggests that the למען שמו motif of Ezekiel 20 is closely connected to the recognition formula and another idea: ונקדשתי . . . לעיני הגוים. The thought that Yahweh is jealous for his name and reputation among the nations "is scarcely to be distinguished from the

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[36] Ibid, 36. Unfortunately, this important assertion is left unsupported by the author.

[37] Ibid, 38.

[38] Ibid, 39.

thought of our formula."[39] Yahweh's acting for the sake of his name leads to their acknowledgment that he is God. Later in the twentieth century, John Strong would propose a similar linkage between לְמַעַן שֵׁם and the recognition formula and urge that the two refrains be read together for purposes of theological interpretation.

Blank's conclusion, that Ezekiel is somehow dependent upon Deutero-Isaiah in his use of the recognition formula, has not won many adherents in the intervening years. For arguments against strict literary dependence in this direction, see chapter four of this dissertation. Actually, Blank's conclusion is not worded to state that Isaiah was Ezekiel's direct source or sole source for the recognition formula. Rather, he writes,

> The conclusion appears to me to be inescapable that *it is assumed by the author of the formula in Ezekiel that the reader is already acquainted with Deutero-Isaiah's reasoning and with his monotheistic construction of the name "Yahveh."*[40]

Regarding other matters, Blank is noncommittal on the questions of the refrain's authenticity (i.e., did it come from Ezekiel's hand or the hand of a subsequent editor?) and Ezekiel's source. After a detailed comparison of Exodus 6:2-9 and Ezekiel 20:5-9, Blank tentatively suggests that "Ezekiel 20 appears to be dependent upon the whole of Exodus 6:2-9, including its secondary strata,"[41] but he declines to draw any firm conclusion on that key issue. Later Jewish interpreters (e.g., Fishbane) would be bolder in their conclusions.

7. HERBERT HAAG

In a suggestive 1943 work which was known to Zimmerli, Herbert Haag proposes that the recognition formula be viewed as originating in the Priestly document.[42] While drawing attention to the terminological and theological relationship between Ezekiel and Exodus, he

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[39] Ibid, 40.

[40] Ibid, 41. Later on, Blank would express a different conclusion regarding אֲנִי יְהוָה. He tentatively suggests that Second Isaiah "may have had help from Ezekiel" in developing the use of "Yahweh" as meaning "God" (see *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958], 68).

[41] Ibid, 45.

[42] Herbert Haag, *Was lehrt die literarische Untersuchung des Ezechiel-Textes?* (Freiburg in der Schweiz: Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1943), 25-28.

argues that the recognition formula in Ezekiel should be interpreted by reference to its use and meaning in the book of Exodus. Haag discusses the connection between the revelation of God's covenant name and the first occurrence of the recognition formula (in Exodus 6), and he states that the other, later occurrences in the Old Testament ought to be read in light of that early connection.

> Nun aber finden wir gerade in diesem priesterlichen Bericht über die Offenbarung des Jahve-Namens zum ersten Mal in der Bibel die Rede-Wendung: «*Ihr sollt erkennen, daß ich Jahve bin*» (Ex 6:7). Wir werden also gut tun, die Wendung zunächst aus diesem Zusammenhang heraus zu deuten. Daß diese Deutung die richtige ist, wird sich nachher aus der Prüfung der übrigen Stellen, in denen die Formel noch vorkommt, ergeben.[43]

The conclusions Haag derives from his study prove by example that his approach in treating the refrain—i.e., understanding the recognition formula by reference to Exodus, especially Exodus 6—leads one to a clearer view of the covenantal significance of the formula. The theme of covenant comes out strongly in Haag's discussion. It is regrettable that Haag gave barely more than two pages to argue and explain his position, for Zimmerli would later sweep this work aside, stating that "the assumption of a direct dependence of Ezekiel on the Priestly writing inadmissibly oversimplifies the problem of tradition."[44] It is the argument of this study that, not only does the Haag proposal deserve fuller review and reconsideration, but Haag was steering scholarship in the right direction.

Old Testament studies took a markedly conservative turn during the early 1950s, as the Albright school came into prominence and the Biblical Theology movement was (re)launched. In the move away from the more speculative analyses of Hölscher and Torrey, Ezekiel scholarship received special impetus from C. G. Howie's cautious study of the compositional history of Ezekiel.[45] Also the great British scholar, H. H. Rowley, exerted his considerable influence in urging greater respect for the text and its claims regarding authorship and setting.[46]

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[43] Ibid, 27.

[44] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 146.

[45] C. G. Howie, *The Date and Composition of Ezekiel*, JBL Monograph Series 4 (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1950).

[46] Rowley, "The Book of Ezekiel in Recent Study."

8. HERBERT G. MAY

The commentary of Herbert G. May (1956) unfortunately attempted something like a middle way between Hölscher and the newer, more conservative scholarship. As it is, May's work tends, shall we say, to fall between two stools. He tries to reflect the more cautious approach to the prophecy in his appreciation for Ezekiel's "considerable homogeneity,"[47] but at the same time he dates the actual composition of the prophecy to the post-exilic era, long after the prophet was dead. May posits that "one person was largely responsible for the present form of the book . . . we shall call this main redactor of the book the editor, even though he is both author and editor."[48] In short, May attributes much of the book, including the recognition formula,[49] to the editor, whom he dates (with Hölscher) to the early fifth century. The exilic prophet himself, whose oracles are woven into the fabric of the book, had no hand in the actual composition of the book as we now have it.[50]

May follows Blank both in attributing the formula's origin to Second Isaiah and in interpreting its meaning in the book of Ezekiel by Isaiah's monotheistic argument: "the meaning of the expression . . . is that he will be recognized as the one and only God."[51] According to May, there is theological discontinuity between the sixth century prophet Ezekiel, who did not envision the salvation of the nations, and the later redactor, who used the recognition formula and who had a universalistic theology.[52]

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[47] Herbert G. May, "The Book of Ezekiel" (Introduction and Exegesis), *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 6 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 45. It is crucial to note here the distinction between May's exegetical comments and the expositional remarks of E. L. Allen at the bottom of the page in the Ezekiel section.

[48] Ibid., 45.

[49] Ibid., 62.

[50] In May's view, "The problem of the book is the recovery of Ezekiel's own writings" (45). But the problem is not easily solved. Regarding Ezekielian materials he says, "it has seemed impossible to isolate them with any certainty" (50). He guesses that "40 percent of the text . . . should be ascribed to the editor."

[51] Ibid., 97.

[52] Ibid., 62. See also May's "Theological Universalism in the Old Testament," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 16 (1948): 100-7. May contends that, while the exilic Ezekiel did not propound a theological universalism, some post-exilic Old Testament literature did, including the work of Ezekiel's editor. This interpretation was later challenged by Harry M. Orlinsky in a May *Festschrift*. See "Nationalism-Universalism and Internationalism in Ancient Israel," in *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament: Essays in Honor of Herbert Gordon May*, eds. Harry Thomas Frank and William L. Reed (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 206-36. This debate is discussed in John Strong, "Ezekiel's Use of the Recognition Formula in His Oracles Against the Nations," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22 (1995): 115-7. Other

9. GEORG FOHRER (POSTPONED)

The work of Georg Fohrer is especially significant because he played an important role in the movement (on continental Europe) toward a reassessment of Ezekiel as a substantial unity, because he published important works on Ezekiel prior to Zimmerli,[53] and because he was among the first to critique Zimmerli's conclusions regarding the recognition formula.[54] Fohrer's contribution to the discussion of the formula will be assessed after the review of Zimmerli's work; this is necessary because Zimmerli did what may be termed the ground-breaking work, and Fohrer's own views are set forth largely in discussion with, and in contrast to, Zimmerli's conclusions.

B. The Scholarly Contributions of Walther Zimmerli

There is no argument that Walther Zimmerli was the doyen among twentieth century Ezekiel scholars. His enormous commentary "is so full of knowledge and detail that it will not soon be replaced, even if the text-critical and redaction-critical methods on which it is based continue to decline in credibility. It remains a reference work of great value."[55] For the student of Ezekiel researching the recognition formula, Zimmerli's penetrating articles from the 1950s, now in English translation,[56] are nearly as valuable as the massive two volumes in Biblischer Kommentar. These articles draw what many scholars consider to be definitive conclusions about the origin, function, and theological significance of the recognition formula in Ezekiel's prophecy. Most recent commentators, including those like

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high-level Jewish discussions of the universalism issue are Harry Orlinsky, "Nationalism–Universalism in the Book of Jeremiah," in *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in Honor of Morton S. Enslin*, ed. John Reumann, 61-83 (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1972); Moshe Weinfeld, "Universalism and Particularism in the Time of the Exile and Restoration," *Tarbiz* 34 (1964): 228-42 [Hebrew].

[53] Georg Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel*, BZAW 72 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1952); G. Fohrer and K. Galling, *Ezechiel*, HAT, 2nd edition (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1955).

[54] G. Fohrer, "Remarks on the Modern Interpretation of the Prophets," *JBL* 80 (1961): 310; *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. David E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 409-10.

[55] Levenson, "Ezekiel in the Perspective of Two Commentators," 217.

[56] That monograph, *I Am Yahweh*, was previously cited (see the fifth footnote of the introduction).

Greenberg who differ sharply with Zimmerli's hermeneutical approach,[57] are content to cite his work and assume the validity of those conclusions.

Zimmerli refuses to follow the many critics preceding him who regard the refrain as secondary, added by the hand of a later editor. Contrary to other commentators like Fohrer, Zimmerli asserted that the recognition formula is not easily detachable from the announcements of judgment and salvation: "this recognition formula is connected in a characteristic way with the preceding context and represents part of the larger structure."[58] In a relatively few passages Zimmerli regards the refrain as redactional, but even in those places, he still discusses the formula's meaning and purpose within the larger literary unit. There has long been a general tendency among form critics studying the prophets to question the authenticity of passages promising hope and salvation. The prophet Ezekiel, some scholars would lead us to believe, pronounced messages of unremitting doom.[59] It is unfortunate that Zimmerli's work betrays a minor prejudice along these lines. He writes,

> That the form of the proof-saying is found relatively frequently in the somewhat later additions promising salvation (but certainly not only there, and not in chapters 40–48) can only be interpreted as showing that a stylized feature was provided by it, which could have been current particularly easily in the prosaic language of the school. However, in many places it clearly goes back to the prophet's own language and can in no way be denied to him.[60]

Zimmerli is not always clear as to which proof-sayings (with the recognition formulae they contain) ought to be considered "somewhat later additions." It is not uncommon for him to speak, almost without distinction, about a saying belonging "to the circle of Ezekiel and his school."[61] The following are categorized as secondary: 6:14; 11:12; 20:26; 22:16 (probable); 23:49; 28:24; 38:16.

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[57] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 133; Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, pp. 36-9. Also merely citing Zimmerli's articles is J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962), 381. Keith W. Carley's work bolsters and develops Zimmerli's main arguments; see *Ezekiel Among the Prophets* (Naperville, Illinois: Allenson, 1974).

[58] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 37.

[59] Siegfried Herrmann, for example, has contended that Ezekiel's prophecy originally contained no message of redemption and hope; see *Die prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament*, BWANT 85 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965), 241ff.

[60] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 40.

[61] Ibid., 368.

One more note is necessary in this overview of Zimmerli's investigation of the linguistic or literary phenomena of the formula and the possibility of secondary expansions. In an appendix to his commentary Zimmerli discusses at length the use of the divine name in the book of Ezekiel. All told, the name Yahweh occurs an astounding four hundred and thirty-four times.[62] Zimmerli finds that the expanded form of the divine name, אדני יהוה, makes up a full half of the cases (217). However, that expanded form is not distributed widely among the occurrences of the recognition formula, appearing only five times (13:9; 23:49 [often discounted as redaction]; 24:24; 28:24; 29:16). The contrast with the overwhelming majority of formulae which have the simple יהוה indicates to Zimmerli that the expanded formulae should be classed together, and "the formulation with אדני יהוה, form-critically at any rate, [regarded] as a later degenerate form."[63] He suggests that one should seriously consider the possibility that the text in these places has been secondarily expanded.

As is well known, Zimmerli was a rigorous practitioner of form-critical analysis. And his interpretation of the recognition formula exemplifies his characteristic method in both its strengths and weaknesses. In Zimmerli's view, the recognition formula consists of two parts, each of which has a different origin and *Sitz im Leben.* The verbal element, "you will know . . .," points to a fact—could be any word or deed—from which knowledge is to be gained. Taking Joseph's words to his brothers in Genesis 42:34 as an early example of ידע being used in a process of proving and demonstrating, Zimmerli says "the ידע – formulation . . . belongs to the sphere of legal examination in which a sign of truth was demanded."[64] Though first appearing in Scripture within a secular context, it also came to

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[62] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 556. Through a textual emendation at 21:14, Zimmerli comes to a tally of four hundred thirty-five.

[63] Ibid., 556. There is another discussion of the combined "Yahweh Adonai" in Georg Fohrer, "Die Glossen im Buche Ezechiel," (204-21) in *Studien zur alttestamentlischen Prophetie (1949–1965)*, BZAW 99 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), 208 especially. See also chapter three below for discussion.

[64] *Ezekiel 1*, 37. Zimmerli further describes that test of veracity in the article, "The Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel" (p. 73), "One person demands from another the offering of a specific, individual proof, a proof the first person is willing to accept as a sign of recognition of all the second person's statements. Recognition comes about by means of a critical testing before which the truth (אמת) of the word of whoever is tested must prove itself."

be used in a religious setting as men boldly requested signs from God, signs by which the person could recognize the validity of the divine message (e.g., Genesis 15:8, where God answers the prayer and seals his promise with a covenant ceremony). The wisdom of Zimmerli's attempt to establish an origin and *Sitz im Leben* for a solitary word, a single, much-used verb, ought to be questioned. Indeed, form-critical attempts to discover the "origins" of various literary types are presently under severe attack.

Following the verbal assertion of recognition (*Erkenntnisaussage*) is the object clause כי אני יהוה which also is said to have a definite and discoverable setting in life. Though Ezekiel has an admittedly close connection theologically and terminologically to the Holiness Code with its repeated use of the formula אני יהוה in legal stipulations, Zimmerli holds that Ezekiel's clause originates in a formula of self-introduction, "as we still find it quite fully set out in the Decalogue preamble, which is intentionally set at the head of the divine proclamations on Sinai."[65] In his article, "I Am Yahweh," Zimmerli seeks out the original setting in life for this formula in theophany accounts in which God appears and speaks at the time of the making of covenants and the giving of the Law.[66] The "short form"—also called the "pure form" and "basic form"—is to be given form-critical priority, while expansions and amplifications (e.g., "I am Yahweh who makes you holy" in Lev. 20:8) constitute a "disintegration" of that original pure formula of self-introduction (*Selbstvorstellungsformel*).

Self-introduction is said to be a kind of self-revelation of a person through the pronouncement of his name, and this formula may be used in the context of reintroducing one already encountered.[67] The most important element of the clause "is the disclosure of Yahweh's personal name, a name containing the full richness and honor of the One naming himself."[68] So profound and basic is the formula of self-introduction that "everything

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[65] Ibid., 37.

[66] *I Am Yahweh*, 22.

[67] Zimmerli writes, "In the repetition of the self-introduction, the one who introduces himself actualizes his freedom afresh—even where it may recall an earlier knowledge and may recall fresh to the mind of the hearer this already known fact." *Ezekiel 1*, 37-38.

[68] *I Am Yahweh*, 1-2.

Yahweh has to announce to his people appears as an amplification of the fundamental statement, 'I am Yahweh.'"[69] Zimmerli pays close attention, indeed, to that self-introductory statement because he believes that its "powerful content is supposed to resound in the statement of recognition."[70] He appropriately causes that formula to carry immense weight theologically.

Having dealt with the two constituent elements, Zimmerli can then speak of a combined formula (the recognition formula or *Erkenntnisformel*) as the elements join to indicate the recognition of the person who freely introduces himself by name. That recognition is not passive in nature, but involves an acknowledgment of the person who reveals himself.

Often in Ezekiel's prophecy that recognition of Yahweh is compelled (or nearly so) by proofs that he is who he claims to be in his name. The mention of facts and the prophecies of judgment and redemption all serve the function of proving what is said in the object clause. These prophecies of judgment and redemption are specifically to be fulfilled in divine acts. Using this interpretation, one gains a clearer understanding of the placement of the recognition formula. Rhetorically, the formula is always connected with the account of an action of Yahweh. Yahweh is always the subject, even when his action is mediated through men. This frequently used, larger prophetic structure Zimmerli names "proof-saying" (*Erweiswort*).[71]

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[69] Ibid., 9.

[70] Ibid., 6.

[71] Scholars have often been confused by the terminology Zimmerli uses in discussing the form-critical components of the recognition formula and the larger "proof-saying" structure. Some have mistakenly used "proof-saying" as the synonym of "recognition formula" (e.g., most recently, Marvin Sweeney, "Ezekiel," in *The Jewish Study Bible*, eds. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 1053). Zimmerli's use of his terms can be quickly explained by an equation:

ידע	+	אני יהוה	=	וידעתם כי־אני יהוה
assertion of recognition *(Erkenntnisaussage)*		formula of self-introduction *(Selbstvorstellungsformel)*		recognition formula *(Erkenntnisformel)*

Where the recognition formula stands at the conclusion of a prophetic announcement (*Zukunftswort*), that larger oracle pattern is termed a "proof-saying" (*Erweiswort*) in Zimmerli's form-critical analysis. Thus, the recognition formula is but a part of the proof-saying, and those two terms are not synonymous. A final note of clarification is needed: Zimmerli will sometimes use *Erkenntnisaussage* and *Erkenntnisformel* as nearly synonymous terms. Strictly speaking, the latter is a large subset of the former; see "The Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," § 3.e.

In further rhetorical analysis, Zimmerli explains that the proof-saying at its simplest is composed of a divine announcement (*Zukunftswort*) and the recognition formula. In addition to this two-part proof-saying, Ezekiel employs a three-part form in which a "motivation" precedes the divine announcement of judgment.[72] Passages fitting this mold will begin with יען: "*Because* the Philistines acted in vengeance . . . therefore (לכן) . . . I shall stretch out my hand against the Philistines . . . Then they shall know that I am Yahweh" (25:15-17). In the developed proof-saying structure, the recognition formula is normally positioned as the concluding target statement; the recognition of Yahweh is the final goal and actual culmination of what is spoken in the preceding divine discourse.

Very helpful is Zimmerli's stress on Ezekiel's themes of divine sovereignty and initiative, which a recent scholar has described as developing from the prophet's "radical theocentricity."[73] The recognition formula is always connected to statements concerning a divine act. Yahweh is ever the author of the action through which recognition comes. The recognition will not come about as the result of human speculation or reflection, but only in the face of Yahweh's acts, acts to which the prophet as proclaimer draws one's attention. Also, the formula always comes from the mouth of Yahweh himself. One does not find any formula referring to Yahweh in the third person: "then you shall know that he is Yahweh."

Several scholars have made the error of thinking that Zimmerli found the origin of the recognition formula proper in Exodus because the Göttingen Professor traced the origin of the self-introductory formula to the exodus tradition. Or more precisely, one can say he found that "formula of self-predication," אני יהוה, lodged in the Decalogue preamble, which is thought to be quite early by those engaged in traditio-historical research. For Zimmerli, discovering the origin of the recognition formula was crucial for understanding the phrase and the doctrine of the knowledge of God in Ezekiel. Zimmerli maintains, and rightly so, that the recognition formula must somewhere have had a life of its own, considering, firstly, the tenacity with which it asserts itself in Ezekiel and, secondly, the

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[72] *Ezekiel 1*, 38-39.

[73] Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 89ff.

formula's marked tendency to allow variations to occur only in a way clearly preserving the basic formulaic content and augmenting the sentence only at the end. What, then, is the origin of the recognition formula?

The formula "is by no means an original coinage of Ezekiel himself."[74] Rather, its usage in Ezekiel is a relatively late witness to a much "older tradition of prophetic discourse structure," a tradition manifested perhaps at its earliest in 1 Kings 20. The account in Kings, according to Zimmerli, is completely independent and classic in its diction (Early Biblical Hebrew), and it was probably committed to writing shortly after the events transpired in the middle of the ninth century. In that account, said by Zimmerli to be set in the context of the "Holy War" tradition explained by von Rad,[75] an unknown prophet announces Yahweh's help in the hour of enemy threat. Twice the king of Israel—unnamed, but thought to be Ahab—is told through God's spokesman, "I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am Yahweh" (1 Kings 20:28; similarly 20:13). Zimmerli believes that 1 Kings 20 represents the earliest occurrence of the prophetic form (*Erweiswort*) which includes the recognition formula, however he goes on to question whether it might go back even further.[76]

Zimmerli considers the profuse employment of the formula as a traditional speech form in the Pentateuch. As one skilled in the methods of literary dissection, he seeks to discern the import of the recognition formula in both the so-called Priestly stratum (which he dates to the post-exilic period) and the "older source-texts" of Exodus. He concludes that the

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[74] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 41.

[75] Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, trans. Marva J. Dawn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), a translation of *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel.* Fifth ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969). Other important books on the topic include Patrick D. Miller, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973); Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1980); Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Tremper Longman III, and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); J. A. Wood, *Perspectives on War in the Bible* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University, 1998).

[76] In his article, "The Word of Divine Self-Manifestation (Proof-Saying): A Prophetic Genre," included in the monograph *I Am Yahweh*, Zimmerli presents a more lengthy exposition of 1 Kings 20, which he terms "the earliest prophetic employment of the proof-saying" (p. 100).

Priestly Writing, in its own versions of the Moses story, "stands quite firmly in the force field of the older Moses tradition and is thus itself a branch of tradition that is independent of Ezekiel."[77] Though recognizing them, Zimmerli does not discuss at much length the many similarities between the use of the recognition formula in the Priestly passages of Exodus and its usage in Ezekiel. He states,

> Our overview shows that most of the Priestly passages employ the same strict formulation of the statement of recognition that we encountered in Ezekiel. They are integrated into a theologically sophisticated context in which Yahweh's initial deed on Israel's behalf—the leading out of Egypt mentioned in Israel's credo—plays a central role. It can be called both the means to knowledge as well as the actual content of knowledge (Exod. 6:7; 16:6).[78]

One begs to ask, what is the literary relationship between P (or the traditions which later came to be recorded in P) and Ezekiel at this point of contact?

At one point, Zimmerli appears to concede that the links between Pentateuchal materials or traditions (including P) and Ezekiel deserve greater attention. He restates his own conclusion regarding the refrain's origin, but then accepts that a problem remains:

> The passages in 1 Kings 20 prompt us to view Ezekiel's use of the statement of recognition within the context of an older prophetic tradition. On the other hand, *there can be no doubt that he has been strongly influenced by Priestly content;* cf. my analysis of Ezekiel 14:1-11 in ZAW 66 (1954), pp. 1 ff. *The real tradition-critical problem as regards the prophecy of Ezekiel and the circle following him is the combination of priestly and prophetic influence.*[79]

When Zimmerli turns to examine the "pre-Priestly statements in the Moses tradition"—which may possibly be assigned to J, indicating that the tradition of the strict statement of recognition extends back to a time earlier than Ahab and 1 Kings 20[80]—he confronts a towering problem. He normally designates "amplifications" and "expansions" of the strict form as a "degeneration" from that strict, theologically-terse

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[77] Ibid., 42. It appears that Zimmerli came to this position quite early. In his inaugural lecture at the University of Göttingen, published as "Das Gotteswort des Ezechiel," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 48 (1951): 249-62, Zimmerli argued (pp. 253-4) that a traditio-historical investigation of Ezekiel 20 reveals that Exodus 6:2ff. is not as closely related as the literary affinities might indicate. Ezekiel 20 presents the exodus tradition without reference to the patriarchal tradition, while Exodus 6 fuses them. Zimmerli wants to draw the conclusion that Ezekiel differs from the book of Exodus with regard to the exact formulation of the exodus tradition that influenced their composition.

[78] Ibid., 45-46. This is Zimmerli's major concession to the position taken in this study.

[79] Ibid., 146. Emphasis mine.

[80] Ibid., 51.

form. The shorter formula is assumed to have form-critical priority. "Terse" and "pure" are adjectives which go together in Zimmerli's analyses.[81] However, again and again Zimmerli discovers amplifications in the older Pentateuchal sources, while the strict form is clearly more characteristic of P. In fact, the data Zimmerli does not discuss are stunning. Not only do "instances of a more freely formulated statement of recognition occur *more frequently* in the older textual sources,"[82] the formulae found imbedded in the older sources are nearly all expansions! This seems like a glaring inconsistency. One wonders if it might indeed be fatal to a portion of Zimmerli's argument, since a primary reason for an early dating of the discourses and formulae in 1 Kings 20 is "the almost classic terseness of their diction." After examining the formulae in likely J passages (outside of what is in the strict sense prophetic literature), Zimmerli concludes that scholars are prevented from designating the formula as an exclusively prophetic form. Rather, "it seems to have been at home in a variety of circumstances from the very beginning."[83]

Clearly, this is not an altogether satisfactory answer to the questions of origin and *Sitz im Leben.* A form-critic especially wishes to have a more certain answer to these questions before proceeding any further. In his article, "The Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," Zimmerli revisits these issues. After discussing, early on, the origin of the formula and the relationship of the various books of the Old Testament in their usage of the formula (pp. 30-63), Zimmerli again examines the roots of the refrain (pp. 71-91). This second discussion reasserts and clarifies many conclusions drawn in the earlier investigation.

Zimmerli takes pains to expound on a number of his key insights. (1) Because the statement of recognition originally belonged in the context of symbolic events, it could not be exclusively limited to either the priestly or prophetic sphere. It could find a home anywhere decisions are made or ambiguous situations are clarified by means of symbolic events. Thus, the statement of recognition (ידע) does not originally belong, as one might

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[81] Ibid., 40.

[82] Ibid., 47. Emphasis added. The list of these freely formulated statements includes Exodus 7:17; 8:9, 20; 9:29; 11:7; and Numbers 16:28-30.

[83] Ibid., 51.

initially assume, in the sphere of transmission of doctrine. It is not concerned with the knowing and learning of the timelessly true postulates or propositions of some doctrinal system. (2) When the formula of self-introduction (in which Yahweh names himself) is joined to the recognition statement to form the recognition formula, one is confronted by "ponderous and awkward phrasing." Why does Ezekiel among others insist upon the statement "they will know that I am Yahweh," instead of the simpler "they will know me"? In a most probing section which is reminiscent of Barth, Zimmerli explains,

> In the strict statement of recognition . . . the recognition content is not the simple, straightforward name of Yahweh that might be so easily inserted as the object (and you shall know Yahweh); rather, we encounter in its place Yahweh's self-introductory statement. . . . Did this combination into the strict recognition formula not ultimately result from the disinclination to have Yahweh's name function as an object? Does the statement's awkward grammatical structure not express precisely that: even within the event of recognition—in which apparently the human is the subject with its action of recognition, and Yahweh the recognized object of this human action—Yahweh himself remains clearly and irreplaceably the subject. This incorporation of Yahweh's self-introductory formula into the statement of recognition within the context of symbolic events and divine judgment expresses the fact that Yahweh alone remains the subject of all recognition events—not only of those involving human recognition of divine action, but of human recognition and knowledge itself.[84]

(3) In addition, Zimmerli argues that in the juxtaposition of the two elements (statement of recognition and self-introductory formula) in the recognition formula both are given a new characteristic orientation.

> [The] statement of recognition is noticeably intensified into the sphere of finality, . . . something enduringly valid is being revealed here. . . . It has attained the status of a central statement whose significance obtains in the middle of Yahweh's great historical acts on behalf of his people. On the other hand, however, this self-introductory formula has been expanded.[85]

That self-introductory formula steps outside its original liturgical setting in life, the theophanic event in the "limited sphere of solemn congregational celebration," to be employed in a prophetic setting.

Considering its usage in both the priestly and prophetic contexts, to which should one trace the origin of the recognition formula? Zimmerli suggests that this question may lead us back to an early period when a functional separation of priesthood and prophetic office

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[84] Ibid., 84-85.

[85] Ibid., 85-86.

did not yet apply. The Göttingen Professor says that the early appearance of the strict statement of recognition in the older Moses tradition and its later foothold in the prophetic and priestly sphere would support this hypothesis. Note that, while this contention pushes the formula's origin back to an early time, this is not to say that Ezekiel was influenced by the usage of the formula in that older Moses tradition. Just as Zimmerli denies that Ezekiel is dependent at this point upon older written prophecy, he would deny a dependence upon older written Pentateuchal sources. "[T]he book of Ezekiel . . . stands in its tradition history on a completely different track. We can follow the prophetic tradition from which it emerges through 1 Kings 20 back into the northern Israelite national prophetic circles."[86]

After investigating the recognition formula, its origin, structure, and distribution throughout the Old Testament, along form-critical lines, Zimmerli turns to a discussion of "the recognition event" or "the concrete process of recognition,"[87] to which our refrain points. All the evidence is said to indicate that

> . . . the knowledge implied by the statement of recognition is not concerned with that part of Yahweh's being that transcends the world, though a superficial look at the strict formulation, "know that I am Yahweh," may tempt us to this conclusion. Such knowledge always takes place within the context of a very concrete history, a history embodied in concrete emissaries and coming to resolution in them. That history becomes a challenge and a claim in the proclaimer's words.[88]

This emphasis of Zimmerli on history, something he has in common with von Rad, is crucial to his explanation of the recognition event. "The knowledge," he says, "implied by the statement of recognition can only be described in connection with the actions of Yahweh that precede the recognition, prompt it, and provide it with a basis."[89] Thus, the sequence of recognition is irreversible: first comes Yahweh's deed, then, secondly, there is human recognition. Zimmerli urges that one guard against a mistaken sequential ordering which would reverse this theological paradigm. He is entirely correct. One does not need to have

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[86] Ibid., 88.

[87] Ibid., 63.

[88] Ibid., 63.

[89] Ibid., 64.

Reformed theological commitments to regard this one finding as extremely suggestive for further biblical-theological work in Ezekiel and elsewhere.

Zimmerli helpfully states that the statement of recognition has an imperative thrust. The recognition of Yahweh is something expected of someone, something demanded. But how is one to understand and respond to that demand unless Yahweh acts? (The first condition for knowledge of Yahweh is that Yahweh act.) Zimmerli implies that there is another obligation which stands alongside the demand that Yahweh be recognized: "helpless supplication to Yahweh in the hour of decision,"[90] i.e., the humble request that Yahweh act.

Perhaps sensing that our terms "recognition" and "knowledge" will not necessarily communicate accurately that the formula's goal is higher than a correction of thinking or a lesson learned essentially in the intellectual sphere,[91] Zimmerli presses the point that the recognition of Yahweh leads to a lasting decision for Yahweh. The consequences of recognition are typically confession, brokenness, and a yielding to the will of God. Zimmerli writes, "Recognition is not just the illumination of a new perspective; it is the process of acknowledgment that becomes concrete in confession and worship and leads directly to practical decisions."[92] It is apparent that Zimmerli equates the "recognition" mentioned in the formula with a transforming, saving knowledge of Yahweh, whether it is the covenant people, Israel, or the nations that come to "recognize."[93] This conclusion would prove controversial, and it merits full discussion in this study.

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[90] Ibid., 65.

[91] Here we might alternatively speak of "truth stated in propositional terms."

[92] Ibid., 67.

[93] Walther Zimmerli has statements to this effect in several places among his writings. One of his fullest statements on this topic is found in *I Am Yahweh*, 88: "An enormous number of passages in Ezekiel are oriented toward the statement of recognition; this high frequency betrays the fact that the knowledge of Yahweh coming about in the worshipping confession, Yahweh is God (1 Kings 18), represents a fulcral concern both of Ezekiel and of the circle dependent on him that edited his book. Their highest concern is neither the restoration of a healthy people nor the reestablishment of social balance within the people; rather it is above all else the adoration that kneels because of divinely inspired recognition, an orientation toward the one who himself says 'I am Yahweh'. The majority of the statements are concerned with the recognition that is to take place within the people Israel. Beyond that, however, we see that this same recognition is expected from the rest of the world's nations. In this Ezekiel is similar to Deutero-Isaiah."

Another of Zimmerli's observations regarding the recognition event is the potential for recognition to occur through, not only an immediate divine act, but also the recounting of Yahweh's acts from the past. This aspect is pregnant with significance for one studying Ezekiel's rehearsal of Israel's history (see especially chapters 16, 20 and 23). Zimmerli writes,

> According to the Old Testament faith, Yahweh's deeds do not occur merely in the given hour in which the people experience them and then sink from memory or lead a shadowy existence in a history that is directed toward the past. Again and again, the Old Testament paraenesis emphasizes the obligation to pass on the stories of Yahweh's deeds. . . . This [Yahweh's oracle in Exodus 10:1-2] refers no doubt to the proclamation and witness of the congregation. However, if Yahweh's deeds do live in this proclamation, then it is self-evident that the recounting of Yahweh's deeds will also always demonstrate the hidden tendency to awaken recognition.[94]

This recounting of Yahweh's deeds "involves a full reactualization in which total—not merely secondary—recognition can be acquired once again." This being the case, the farewell speeches of so many Israelite leaders (Moses, Joshua, Samuel), the Passover ritual, storytelling of Yahweh's acts in salvation history, and the reading of Scripture must have possessed tremendous power for good in the on-going life of the covenant community.

Zimmerli makes an excellent contribution to our understanding of Israel's religious life when he comments upon the signs and observances through which Yahweh's actions live on.

> Yahweh's actions on behalf of his people live not only in the narrative proclamation of the people of God, but equally in the signs Yahweh has given his people as fixed observances, observances witnessing to his particular actions on behalf of this same people. Recognition and knowledge are revivified ever anew from the perspective of these signs and the people's encounter with them.[95]

The example of Sabbath immediately comes to the mind of any student of Ezekiel. Zimmerli helps us understand why the exiled prophet connects the Sabbath institution with Sinai rather than Creation. Ezekiel wished for Sabbath observance to be viewed in the context of Yahweh's historical acts on behalf of his people, "since in this case also recognition or knowledge of God is not acquired from some timeless, nonhistorical process." From this vantage point the Sabbath is seen as nothing less than "the

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[94] Ibid., 68-69. The theological influence of von Rad and his early "Credo" idea are clearly in evidence here.

[95] Ibid., 70.

sacramental sign and warranty of a particular history from whose perspective Israel can recognize both its status as the elected people of God and Yahweh as the God who elects and sanctifies his people."[96]

In this brief section the impossible is attempted. One cannot begin to do justice in a mere dozen pages or so to Zimmerli's enormous learning and contribution to scholarly inquiry into the refrain. It is with a certain sense of defeat that one must move on to consider how later scholars have critiqued and built upon Zimmerli's classic essays. A deep and strong foundation was laid by Zimmerli for all subsequent work. Surely all Ezekiel specialists would agree that, even where Zimmerli is not fully persuasive, he is instructive.[97]

C. Scholarship Since Zimmerli

Since Zimmerli's comprehensive form-critical treatment of the refrain in the 1950s, most who have worked in Ezekiel studies have contented themselves merely to cite Zimmerli's work and assume his conclusions, occasionally dissenting or attempting to fine-tune his analysis. The following discussion will focus more upon those who have offered a contrasting viewpoint on the recognition formula or those who have treated that formula in a fuller, more probing way.

1. GEORG FOHRER

Quite soon after Walther Zimmerli published his essays, Fohrer, who was already established as a noted Ezekiel scholar,[98] critiqued his conclusions. Zimmerli's proposal, that the prophet's use of the recognition formula showed a dependence upon the prophetic tradition which emerges in 1 Kings 20, came in for especially pointed criticism. In two

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Such was Victor Paul Furnish's assessment of C. K. Barrett's fine commentary on Second Corinthians. See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB 32A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), ix.

[98] Georg Fohrer, *Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel*, BZAW 72 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1952); and idem and Kurt Galling, *Ezechiel*, 2nd edition, HAT 13 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1955).

places,[99] Fohrer argues that the prophetic discourse structure which Zimmerli calls *Erweiswort* is quite late; it cannot be dated back three centuries. Fohrer supports this contention with assertions that "the occurrence of this formula twice in anecdotal prophetical utterances does not provide a broad enough basis for the assumption that centuries later Ezekiel made use of an early literary type."[100] Moreover, Zimmerli's two selected texts in 1 Kings are best considered to be secondary interpolations which interrupt the flow of the narrative. Rather than 1 Kings providing Ezekiel with a prototype, these prophetical sayings "were instead given their present form by the last Deuteronomistic redactor of the books of Kings *on the basis of Ezekiel's words.*"[101] Fohrer turns Zimmerli's interpretation of the formula's origin on its head, arguing that 1 Kings reveals a literary dependence upon Ezekiel. The recognition formula found in Kings is not an older literary type, but an "interpretive formula" easily appended to a text whose account of events, the redactors must have believed, needed authoritative explanation. While Fohrer is inclined to treat the formulae in 1 Kings 20 as secondary accretions, his language at points indicates that he has retreated from his earlier position that the recognition formulae in Ezekiel are secondary. Zimmerli's essays may have effected this change of mind.

What does Fohrer propose as the probable background, instead of prophetic traditions reflected in 1 Kings? He turns to the Yahwist source in Exodus, which includes the recognition formula in the context of the plagues. Among other relevant texts which might be cited at this point, Exodus 7:17 reads: "Thus says Yahweh, 'By this you shall know that I am Yahweh: with the staff that is in my hand I shall strike the water of the Nile, and it shall be turned to blood.'" Though Zimmerli and Fohrer disagree as to the precise background of the formula, they do share common ground in their belief that it had its origin in oracles against the nations.[102] Following after the dialogue between Zimmerli and Fohrer,

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[99] Georg Fohrer, "Remarks on the Modern Interpretation of the Prophets," *JBL* 80 (1961): 310; *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. David E. Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 409-10.

[100] Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 409.

[101] Ibid.

[102] This point is mentioned in Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 93.

scholarship has viewed the prophetic tradition and exodus tradition, reflected in 1 Kings and Exodus, as the two leading options to consider, when facing the questions of both the formula's origin and possible influences upon Ezekiel's usage of the refrain.

What is the message communicated to the subject of the recognition formula? What does it mean to "know that I am Yahweh"? And what is the function of the refrain? Fohrer goes to the first occurrences of what he terms the "interpretive formula" in the Yahwist material (Exodus). Using the Pentateuchal tradition as his guide, he says,

> Its purpose is to provide a proper understanding of the event reported or announced, because every event needs interpretation. . . . It is intended to summon the listener to judge that it is Yahweh who has intervened or is about to intervene, with his wrath or with his aid.[103]

2. H. GRAF REVENTLOW

H. Graf Reventlow has not drawn much recent support from Ezekiel specialists for his claim that the prophet encourages hope that the nations will turn in allegiance to Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel.[104] Reventlow (1959) believes that the recognition formula in speeches directed toward the nations indicates that there will ultimately be repentance. Yes, those formulae are set in the context of terrible judgment oracles, however, Israel is also said to come to the knowledge that "I am Yahweh" through judgment. So, is it not possible that the nations might as well? Reventlow finds an affinity between Second Isaiah and Ezekiel in their use of formulae, such as "before the eyes of the nations" and the recognition formula. Despite these lines of argument, most scholars today are inclined to see the many recognition formulae addressing the nations as a rhetorical device. In those passages, they say, "there are clear indications that the purpose is to highlight the revelation of Yahweh rather than to offer a positive vision of the role of that nation."[105] This debate is important

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[103] Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 411.

[104] H. Graf Reventlow, "Die Völker als Jahwes Zeugen bei Ezechiel," *ZAW* 71 (1959): 33-43. See especially pp. 35-36. Note that the recognition formula is only one of several key formulas investigated by Reventlow.

[105] Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response*, 94.

for understanding the rhetorical purpose and the theological meaning of the recognition formula in Ezekiel, and it will be discussed further in chapter six below.

3. ROLF RENDTORFF

The issue of revelation in and through history has generated an immense amount of work by theologians over the last fifty years, and the name of Rolf Rendtorff figures prominently in the discussion of that issue. In a 1961 essay published in the controversial volume, *Revelation As History*, Rendtorff devotes quite a few pages to the formulae treated so extensively by Zimmerli.[106] However, the formulae are discussed only insofar as they relate to his main topic, which is " The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel." In other words, the discussion of the recognition formula is clearly subordinate to other concerns and questions.

Rendtorff takes issue with Zimmerli's programmatic conviction that the short refrain אני יהוה is the original formulation of the self-introductory statement. Rather, Rendtorff argues, "it appears as an abbreviation of the statement in an expression of the most intense meaning."[107] Specifically, Zimmerli's short form represents "the strictly cultic style of the later priestly texts in the Pentateuch and Ezekiel,"[108] and is a reduction of such expressions in older texts as: "I am Yahweh, the God of your fathers," "I am Yahweh, who has brought you out of Egypt," or "I am Yahweh, your God." Rendtorff interprets the use of the name יהוה as a claim to power, unique power over other gods. "The short form presents the final pregnant coalescence of Jahweh's titles of power."[109]

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[106] Rolf Rendtorff, "Die Offenbarungsvorstellungen im alten Israel," in *Offenbarung als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 21-41. The chapter was translated as "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," in *Revelation as History*, ed. Wolfhart Pannenberg (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 25-53. Zimmerli responds to Rendtorff in "'Offenbarung' im Alten Testament," *Evangelische Theologie* 22 (1962): 15-31, and Rendtorff's rejoinder is "Geschichte und Wort im Alten Testament," *Evangelische Theologie* 22 (1962): 621-49.

[107] Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation," 40.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

Rendtorff goes a step further and asserts that even in the priestly texts the short form is not the original; he bases his reasoning on the presence of the well-developed form in Exodus 20: "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This reasoning overturns the interpretation of the formula as one of "self-introduction." Instead, it is an assertion of authority, reinforcing the laws to which it was originally attached. Rendtorff writes, "[T]he name יהוה must be here presupposed as known and carrying weight that commands emanating from this God have an authority that is unambiguously binding."[110]

Turning his attention to the recognition formula, Rendtorff agrees with a number of Zimmerli's main lines of interpretation, while disagreeing once again over the issue of which form ought to be considered original. He draws attention to the very objection raised earlier this chapter in the summary of Zimmerli's work. The so-called older sources of the Pentateuch rarely ever have the shorter expression כי אני יהוה . . ., but the expanded forms abound (cf. Exodus 8:10; 9:14, 29). Thus, Rendtorff contends that אני יהוה ought to be understood as an abbreviation for fuller, more "theologically pregnant" statements, for example, אנכי יהוה אלהיך "I am Yahweh your God" (Exodus 20:1).[111] With this in mind, Rendtorff declares that "the name itself is not the object of understanding, but the claim of power supported by it. The short formula must also be understood as a technical expression summing up this activity."[112] Through the act of Yahweh accompanied by the formula, the witnesses would acknowledge his power, superiority, and that he alone is God. Appropriate to this interpretation is the English translation of the German term

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[110] Ibid., 41.

[111] Here Rendtorff builds upon the research of Karl Elliger into the formula, done apparently in preparation for the Elliger volume on *Deuterojesaja*, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament 11/1, Jesaja 40,1–45,7 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970-8). See Elliger, "Ich bin der Herr—euer Gott," in *Theologie als Glaubenswagnis, Festschrift für Karl Heim*, 9-34 (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1954); and "Das Gesetz Leviticus 18," *ZAW* 67 (1955): 1-25. Elliger offered a few criticisms of Zimmerli's work in passing. He urged that אנכי יהוה not be viewed as an originally independent element, later merged with אלהיכם. Also we should understand the name Yahweh as possessing the overtones of older statements, "I am Yahweh, the God of your fathers," or "I am Yahweh who brought you out of Egypt."

[112] Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation," 42.

Erkenntnisformel used throughout Rendtorff's article: "the formula of acknowledgment." He construes it as such, and not as a "recognition" of One newly introduced.

When evaluating the recognition formula as found in the prophetic sphere, Rendtorff is inclined to follow Zimmerli in tracing the tradition back to 1 Kings 20, but he also takes time to discuss "the expressions of knowledge" or recognition formulae found in Exodus.[113] Once again, he discovers evidence which he believes supports his contention that אני יהוה is virtually an abbreviation. When the recognition formula is reused later in Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, it is transformed and redirected toward the self-vindication of Yahweh. Rather than stating Yahweh's intention to intervene on behalf of Israel (as in 1 Kings 20), "the formula [in Ezekiel] is exclusively connected with words of judgment."[114] These claims and observations will be tested later in this dissertation.

Rendtorff uses these observations as a springboard for his main point regarding the problem of revelation. The knowledge of Yahweh in his deity is intended not only for Israel, but for other nations as well. He points to the formulaic passages in Exodus as indicating that Pharaoh and the Egyptians "ought" to have acknowledged God. He draws parallels with Ezekiel's statement that "all flesh" (21:4, 10) ought to confess. Rendtorff writes, "[I]t is always Jahweh's demonstration of power that is observable and understandable to all the peoples and all the world."

> All peoples, "all flesh," the ends of the world, see what happened, and its meaning as the self-vindication of God is accessible to them all. History is not here understood as the "aimed" activity of God, at least not in the sense that it is only "aimed" at Israel. It is not something penultimate which has only a subservient function in relation to the self-manifestation of Jahweh. On the contrary, it has its fundamental meaning *as* a happening because in it God himself is manifested. This has only to be acknowledged by anyone who saw and experienced what happened.[115]

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[113] With regard to the Exodus formulae, Rendtorff makes the key observation that the expressions of knowledge involving the Egyptians use the simple אני יהוה (Exod. 7:5; 14:4, 18), while those addressed to Israel read אני יהוה אל היכם (6:7; 16:12; 29:46). In chapter four of this thesis, that Rendtorff claim will tested, and the Exodus formulae will be compared with patterns of Ezekiel's recognition formulae.

[114] Ibid., 44. This is a strange assertion to make since Rendtorff himself quotes, within the next few lines, a passage including the recognition formula which promises the restoration of Israel (37:12-13)!

[115] Ibid., 46.

Thus, acknowledgment (or recognition) does not come about through the isolated word of proclamation, but by the activity that the word proclaims. This is thought to be an extreme position by some Old Testament scholars.

An acute thinker and a productive scholar, Professor Rendtorff has more recently revisited some of the same theological and literary questions taken up in his 1961 essay. He has continued to write on the topic of revelation and history and to discuss the recognition formula and related texts where the verb ידע is found.[116] In his essays, fascinatingly, he reveals that he now has an affinity for Greenberg's approach of "holistic interpretation," and he offers some criticism of the form-critical approach in which he was originally trained. Regarding *Formgeschichte* he contends that (1) "It can easily lead to the isolating of individual text units from one another, the consequence being an atomization of the text." (2) Texts need to be read in their wider context, without all their smaller sub-units being set apart form-critically; they "have actually been formulated with an eye to a wider context." Therefore we must assay a redefinition of our form categories and, in places, perhaps substitute "prophetic book" for "prophetic saying." (3) Form criticism must be supplemented by final form methods. These points of critique may certainly be applied, with all due respect, to Zimmerli.

4. WALTHER EICHRODT

The views of Walther Eichrodt are of more than passing interest because of his sensitivity to the theology of Ezekiel. The approach of his worthy commentary for the series Das Alte Testament Deutsch (1959-66)[117] is essentially within the mainstream of critical opinion, though he is criticized somewhat for frequent emendations in favor of the shorter LXX, particularly with regard to the combined divine name אדני יהוה.[118] He does

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[116] Rolf Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology* (previously cited). Among the essays, see especially "Revelation and History: Particularism and Universalism in Israel's View of Revelation" (114-24); and "Ezekiel 20 and 36:16ff. in the Framework of the Composition of the Book" (190-5); idem, *Die "Bundesformel,"* Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 160 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995).

[117] Walther Eichrodt, *Der Prophet Hesekiel* (previously cited). Subsequent citations are taken from the Quin translation, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970).

[118] Ibid., 12.

on occasion resist this tendency in his interpretation of the recognition formula (e.g., at 20:26). Eichrodt regards the text of Ezekiel achieved by critical research "as being in the main that committed to writing by Ezekiel himself,"[119] and this more conservative perspective will understand the refrain as part of the original prophecy in most instances.

Because Eichrodt views the recognition formula as being in line with certain priestly emphases, his analysis of Ezekiel's priestly style and method of argument deserves some attention. That analysis has several profound insights, one of which points to Ezekiel's probable intellectual training as a boy while preparing for a career in the Zion priesthood. The education resulted in a thorough acquaintance with the history of Israel *and its sacred literature.*

> He grew up amid the proud traditions of a priesthood where a unique conception of history was combined with a conception of God of a deeply spiritual character full of inner greatness and other-worldly sublimity. . . .The exercise of pronouncing and interpreting the law had trained him to express his ideas with extreme precision of thought and terminology, and had also taught him to present his views in an architectonic construction and to give full consideration to all their various aspects. In expressing his thoughts he likes to make use of the scholastic lecture, enumerating each different case and the conclusions resulting from it, which gives his manner of speech the slow repetitious flow of the pedagogue and educationalist, but also the carefully chosen terms and weighty formulations of attained results. This intellectualist training had been combined with the acquiring of great learning, which shows an acquaintance not only with the past history of his own nation, its literature and the problems of its government and political development, but also such understanding of the life of surrounding nations as made it possible for him to criticize both their religious beliefs and their political activities.[120]

In expressing himself with "extreme precision of thought and terminology," Ezekiel made use of "an astonishingly rich variety of forms."[121] The recognition formula deserves special mention among all those forms because of its prominence in the prophecy. Eichrodt says that that "stereotyped form" points to the objective of God's actions, "which is to confer a new knowledge of himself." What is the essence of this knowledge, according to Eichrodt? He will describe it as a "recognition of the all-prevailing almighty power and the

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[119] Ibid., 13. Of course, the critical research which has taken place views the final form of the text as "the result of a complicated process of remodelling, elaborating, and supplementing" (p. 21). Eichrodt is not always confident that the redactors are true and faithful interpreters of the prophet's line of thinking (see pp. 41-43).

[120] Ibid., 22.

[121] Ibid., 15.

exclusive rights of the divine Lord, but [which] also points to obedience to his will." The Basel Professor will speak of Yahweh acting "to prove his own existence to a humanity estranged from him."[122] Generally speaking, Eichrodt is dependent upon Zimmerli's essays, and he emphasizes many of the same themes: the recognition is always connected to, and has its source in, some historical action by Yahweh, by means of which he wills to make himself known. Though not discussing the origin of the formula, Eichrodt refers to Zimmerli's finding that it is a feature found in earlier prophecy (1 Kings 20:13, 26). Eichrodt is comfortable using Zimmerli's terminology (specifically *Erweiswort*), but he develops his own as well, such as the designation "statement of design" (*die Zweckangabe*) for the recognition formula.[123]

Eichrodt is among the several who, like Reventlow and Ackroyd,[124] perceive a missionary purpose in the oracles of judgment against the nations. Eichrodt believes that there will be a positive recognition of Yahweh among the nations through his acts in history.

> The aim of Ezekiel's commission to preach is seen to be the revelation of God by word and deed, leading to the knowledge "that I am Yahweh," i.e. a will to universal lordship aiming at world-recognition of his lordship. Such a divine declaration belongs to a dimension different from all contemplative ways of representing God, and from all metaphysical statements regarding his nature; it is the statement of a fact demanding recognition and surrender. By going beyond Israel and including the Gentiles, it frees God's act of revelation from being imprisoned within a dogma of election tying him indissolubly to a single nation, obliging him to give it the first place among the nations and to impart himself to it alone.[125]

Whether there is sufficient cause to interpret the formulae spoken to the nations in so positive a light will be discussed in a later chapter, "The Interpretation of the Formula and Intertextuality."

Those familiar with Eichrodt's two-volume *Theology of the Old Testament* would expect from the commentary an emphatic stress on the theme of covenant in Ezekiel, and they are not disappointed. In the opinion of this student, much of the commentary's value and insight derives from Eichrodt's covenantal approach. He explores Ezekiel with that

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[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 38. [*Der Prophet Hezekiel*, ATD 22/2, 30*].

[124] Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 115.

[125] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 44.

topic in mind, and he masterfully draws out the theology of the prophecy. He repeatedly shows how

> Only the unfathomable patience of God, who keeps faith with a nation which has faithlessly broken his covenant, makes it possible to discern within the history of corruption a history of salvation, which celebrates the praise of the compassionate Lord of the covenant.[126]

Though Eichrodt does not speak of the refrain as a covenantal formula, he does interpret it by reference to covenant. He leaves no doubt that the recognition formula strikes the key-note of the prophecy; he writes of "the purpose of God's dealings with Israel and the nations which dominates Ezekiel's whole message and finds its proper expression in the objective explicitly stated in the statement of design, 'they shall know that I am Yahweh'."

> The phrase "I am Yahweh" which is used to describe the content of this knowledge is a formula which points back to a cultic event, God's own affirmation of the incomparableness of his own nature, *as he makes himself known in concluding the covenant.*[127]

The covenant theme will be explored at length in chapter six of this study, when it comes time to offer a theological interpretation of the recognition formula.

5. FRANK LOTHAR HOSSFELD

Following after Fohrer, who urged caution among fellow *Alttestamentler* in proposing new literary types (*Gattungen*),[128] Frank Lothar Hossfeld (1977, 1983)[129] has subjected Zimmerli's proposal of a new "proof-saying" *Gattung* to a rather thorough critique. Even as Hossfeld respects Zimmerli's diligent work and appreciates his good intentions to elucidate the usage and meaning of the recognition formula within Ezekiel, he finds fault with Zimmerli's approach at several points, mainly in the areas of syntactical analysis and

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[126] Ibid., 45.

[127] Ibid., 38. Emphasis added.

[128] Fohrer, "Remarks on the Modern Interpretation of the Prophets," 310. After mentioning his own work on "Die Gattung der Berichte über symbolische Handlungen der Propheten" (*ZAW* 64 [1952]: 101-20) and Walther Zimmerli's proposal of a new *Gattung* termed, *das Wort des göttlichen Sebsterweises (Erweiswort)*, Fohrer says, "It is necessary, however, to exercise caution in the discovery of new literary types."

[129] Frank Lothar Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Theologie des Ezechielbuches*, Second ed., Forschung zur Bibel 20 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1983), 40-46.

conclusions regarding the structure of the *Erweiswort.* First of all, Hossfeld alleges that, as he discusses the positioning of the recognition formula within the proof-saying, Zimmerli fails to indicate his criteria when separating the prophetic speech-material into categories; he merely gives examples of positioning and is not sufficiently analytical in drawing his conclusions about the "normal order" of elements in the proof-saying's structure.

> Für diese Einteilung nennt Zimmerli keine genauen Kriterien noch gibt er die Belege an. Die Bewertung "Normalanordnung" preßt die Statistik allzu schnell in einen vorgefertigten Rahmen und setzt eine Interpretation des Kontextes voraus.[130]

The second point of disagreement concerns one of Zimmerli's main conclusions, that is, that the recognition formulae "normally" come "at the end of a line of thought within a cohesive speech unit" (*am Ende einer Gedankenreihe innerhalb des Redezusammenhangs*) and function as a "final syntactic construction" or *Schlußsyntagma.* Hossfeld proceeds to do a painstaking study of the placement or positioning of the recognition formulae within the discrete speech-units, and he concludes that out of eighty[131] formulae, there are only twenty-five that serve as a "reliable concluding announcement" (*verläßlicher Schlußanzeiger*). These twenty-five are mostly the shortest and simplest formulation, "you/they shall know that I am Yahweh." Discerning the position of the recognition formula within speech-units is more difficult where the formula is expanded. Expansions, then, require greater attention.

> Schwieriger und damit unsicher wird es, die Position der Erkenntnisformel zu bestimmen, wenn die Erkenntnisformel erweitert wird; denn durch die Erweiterungen kann sich die Erkenntnisformel unmerklich von der End- in die Kontextposition verlagern. Das gerade bei der Erkenntnisformel zu beobachtende Phänomen der Erweiterung hängt mit die Variabilität des Erkenntnisinhaltes zusammen.

Hossfeld's analysis of the syntactical positioning of the recognition formulae—his main interest—will long be valuable to scholarship.

The third point of Hossfeld's critique stems from his syntactical analysis and his conclusion that Ezekiel's recognition formula, in its variability and flexibility, does not easily fit within the bounds of the proof-saying as defined by Zimmerli. Other scholars

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[130] Ibid., 40.

[131] Note the data collected in the next chapter of this study, which provide a count of 72 more carefully defined "recognition formulae" and an additional 8 closely "related phrases" in Ezekiel's prophecy. There is scholarly debate about the true tally of recognition formulae.

besides Hossfeld have pointed out that even Zimmerli himself in different essays frankly admits the seriousness of the problem here.[132] Too frequently he must speak of a "breakup of the original structure" (*Auflösungserscheinung der ursprünglichen Wortstruktur*) or "this later breakup of the form" (*diese junge Zersetzung der Form*) or "the awkward formulation of the statement, deviating so strongly from what is normal" (*die ungelenke, von üblichen stark abweichende Formulierung der Aussage*).[133] In considering the problems associated with Zimmerli's proposal, it may be wise for scholarship in the future to be more guarded about this *Gattung*. As for Hossfeld, he declares that he doubts the existence of such a literary type and contends that the recognition formula should be interpreted "only as a formula" and not within an alleged *Erweiswort*. He writes in his summary,

> Unter der Hand haben wir die Erkenntnisformel nur als Formel betrachtet und nicht so sehr als Gattungsweiser einer von Zimmerli beschriebenen Gattung "Erweiswort". Die Variabilität ihrer Funktionen unterstützt die Meinung Fohrers, in ihr nur eine "deutende Formel" zu sehen und nicht ein Merkmal, das eine ganze Gattung konstituiert; zumal diese Gattung nach Zimmerli selbst schon in ihren vermeintlich ältesten Exemplaren 1 Kön 20,13.28 unter einer "anhebenden Erweichung des Stils" leidet, und im Ezechielbuch eine "starke Zersetzung der Redeform, ja ein gelegentlich völliges Zerfließen derselben im größeren Redezusammenhang fest[zu]stellen ist".[134]

6. PHILIP HARNER

Philip Harner has written a well-received monograph (1988) on Isaiah's use of the divine self-predication "I am Yahweh." His study seeks to relate together "two complexes of thought: the meaning and function of the formula 'I am Yahweh,' on the one hand, and the analysis of the themes of grace and law in II Isaiah, on the other."[135] Because Harner's

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[132] E.g., Rudolf Mosis, "Ez 14,1-11—ein Ruf zur Umkehr," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19 (1975): 184.

[133] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 39 (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 59*); "The Knowledge of God," in *I Am Yahweh*, 36 (*Erkenntnis Gottes*, 10 = *Gottes Offenbarung*, 50).

[134] Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen*, 45-46.

[135] Philip B. Harner, *Grace and Law in Second Isaiah: "I Am the Lord,"* Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies 2 (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), vi. See also his earlier study, "The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah," *JBL* 88 (1969): 418-34, which treated the self-predication formula (אני יהוה). Another scholar who treats that formula is Morgan L. Phillips, "Divine Self-Predication in Deutero-Isaiah," *Biblical Research* 16 (1971): 32-51, who mentions the recognition formula in passing.

procedure is first "to examine the meaning of the self-predication . . . in Old Testament tradition, apart from II Isaiah, and then argue that the phrase retained its traditional connotations as II Isaiah himself used it,"[136] he includes an examination of the recognition formula in Ezekiel. That examination is sufficiently detailed and insightful to command the attention of Ezekiel scholars.

Harner chooses not to distinguish between the use of אני יהוה as a formula of self-predication and אני יהוה as a constituent part of the recognition formula. Instances of both usages are lumped together. This decision may be objected to at the outset. Correctly, and in agreement with Zimmerli's approach, Harner posits no difference between the short form and the expansions, such as "I am the Lord Yahweh" and "I am Yahweh your God."

Harner believes that "the original setting for the divine self-predication 'I am Yahweh' was God's revelation of himself to Moses."[137] The early narrative sources (of the Pentateuch) record this, and the later sources are said to confirm this original setting in the time of Moses. These sources suggest that God was seeking to reveal himself more widely. "Yahweh's revelation to Moses, as important as it was in itself, was closely correlated with his working through historical events to make himself known, in ever widening circles, to his own people and also to others.[138]

Establishing the original setting of the form in both the Exodus event and the giving of the law allows Harner to underscore the theological point of his thesis:

> . . . [T]he self-predication, from the very beginning, was associated with the themes of grace and law together. It introduced Yahweh as the God who freely took the initiative to deliver his people from bondage, and it also presented him as the God who asked his people to live according to his laws within the covenant relationship that he had established. The self-predication in the covenant at Sinai illustrates this close connection between the themes of grace and law: "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me . . ." (Exod. 20:2 ff.).[139]

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[136] Harner, *Grace and Law*, vii.

[137] Ibid., 12.

[138] Ibid., 12.

[139] Ibid., 13.

This point is well taken, and the stress on covenant is very suggestive (grace precedes law; grace forms the theological basis for the expectations Yahweh places upon his covenant people; grace and law are securely linked together in the covenant).

Harner also traces the combination of the introductory statement,[140] "you (they) shall know that . . . ," with the formula of self-predication to the early narrative sources of the Pentateuch. He seems to part ways with Zimmerli when he states that "Ezekiel received this introductory statement from the tradition available to him and evidently found it so meaningful that he used it much more often than any previous writer."[141] (The tradition he has just cited is not 1 Kings 20 but the J/E sources "composed some centuries before the time of Ezekiel himself.") Though Zimmerli would have been receptive to Harner's notions regarding the process whereby the two constituent parts were first joined together, Zimmerli forcefully denied that *Ezekiel's* source was anything other than the prophetic tradition imbedded in 1 Kings 20.

According to Harner, Ezekiel as well as II Isaiah associates the self-predication with the themes of both grace and law.

> When God introduces himself as Yahweh, he promises to bring the Israelites out of Egypt into a new land, and he also commands them not to give their loyalty to other gods or to worship idols. In all these respects Ezekiel faithfully reflects the structure of earlier tradition, since a number of other sources, as we have seen, also associate the formula "I am Yahweh" with a theophany to Moses or Israel that takes place in Egypt, embraces the themes of grace and law, and initiates a relationship in which God will deal with Israel throughout the course of her history.[142]

This may be construed as a rather conservative approach to the prophets—discounting the one matter of dividing Isaiah into pre-exilic and exilic books. Harner is proposing that covenant, with its themes of grace and law, is the basis and theological background for all the phrases of self-predication, going all the way back to the time of Moses and Israel's earliest oral and literary traditions. This study contends that Harner's traditio-historical conclusions, marking out a closer connection between Exodus and Ezekiel's formula than Zimmerli's works, are more in line with the evidence.

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[140] This is what Zimmerli terms the "statement of recognition."

[141] Harner, *Grace and Law*, 34.

[142] Ibid., 37.

Taking up the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, which is all important for understanding the prophecy's recognition formula, Harner says that Ezekiel used the divine self-predication itself as a way of reinforcing the parallels between the Exodus/Wilderness period and Ezekiel's own time.

> Yahweh addressed the Israelites with his self-predication when he gave them statutes and ordinances in the wilderness (Ezek. 20:12, 19, 20, 26). He will address them in a similar way when he brings them out of exile, judges them once again in the "wilderness," and restores them to their own land (Ezek. 20:38, 42, 44). On a literary level this use of the divine self-predication highlights the similarities between the two periods and gives a sense of unity to the structure of thought in the chapter. On a theological level it enables Ezekiel to remind his fellow exiles that Yahweh is still a God of grace and law, as he was when he first began to work in the history of Israel. As a God of grace, Yahweh seeks to deliver his people; as a God of law, he must enter into judgment against them. His grace will prevail because he will act for the sake of his "name," just as he originally acted toward the wilderness generation.[143]

Such self-conscious use of the language of the Exodus tradition by the prophet in order to draw parallels between Israel "in the days of her youth" and during Ezekiel's own day is also the interpretation proposed by Haag and Fohrer. This dissertation will move in a similar direction, highlighting the likelihood that the recognition formula is best understood as a part of the Exodus tradition. This student is glad for the support lent by Harner.

7. PAUL M. JOYCE

Surely one of the more fruitful studies on Ezekiel published over the last twenty years is Paul Joyce's *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel* (1989).[144] This Oxford scholar investigates, not only the recognition formula in Ezekiel, but the full range of formulae, and he concludes that they all highlight the extent to which the focus of the book is upon Yahweh himself. Joyce appropriately terms this overall orientation "the radical theocentricity of Ezekiel" (the title of his chapter six) and finds it difficult to parallel anywhere else in the Old Testament.

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[143] Ibid., 38. Relating the revealed God of grace to the revealed God of holy law is at the heart of Ezekiel's theological concerns.

[144] Paul Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel*, JSOTSup 51 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). We are eager to see his upcoming commentary on Ezekiel in the New Century Bible series.

Joyce begins his investigation of the recognition formula with a quick summary of the varied usage of the refrain. He also includes a most helpful chart showing the distribution of formulae into categories (who will recognize? in the context of what divine act?). That chart is reproduced (with corrections) immediately below, as it will prove useful in later chapters for comparing Ezekiel's formulae with those in other Old Testament books.

Table 1. — Joyce's Categories of Recognition Formulae in Ezekiel (Corrected)[145]

The Nations Will Know That 'I Am Yahweh' When . . .	
(A) Yahweh punishes the nations	***(B) Yahweh delivers the nations***
25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23; 29:6, 9, 16; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15; 35:4, 9, 15; 38:23; 39:6 [Variations='Expansions': ~~*25:14;*~~ 35:12]	
(C) Yahweh punishes Israel	***(D) Yahweh delivers Israel*** 36:23; 39:7 [Expansions: 17:24; 36:36; 37:28]
Israel Will Know That 'I Am Yahweh' When . . .	
(E) Yahweh punishes the nations	***(F) Yahweh delivers the nations***
28:26b; 39:22	
(G) Yahweh punishes Israel	***(H) Yahweh delivers Israel***
6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 27; 11:10, 12; 12:15, 16, 20; *13:14; 15:7;* 20:26, *38; 21:5 (MT 21:10);* 22:16, *22;* 23:49; 24:24, 27; *33:29;* 39:28a [Expansions: 5:13; 7:9; 13:9, 21, 23; 14:8; 17:21]	16:62; 20:42, 44; 28:24, 26a; 29:21; 34:27; 36:11, 38; 37:6, 13, *14*; 39:28b [Expansions: 20:20; 34:30]
NOT CLASSIFIED: 20:12	

[145] Joyce, 91. Note that for two of the formulae Joyce provides a dual classification: 39:28 is said to be both "G" and "H," while 28:26 is found in "E" and "H." Joyce's chart has *not* been simply reproduced here, because several corrections were required. There are two types of problems with his list. First of all, he has not included all the recognition formulae. We needed to add the following to his category "G": 13:14; 15:7; 20:38; 21:5 (MT 21:10); 22:22; and 33:29. His category "H" needed 37:14. The recognition formula in 20:12 is missing on Joyce's list, but that refrain does not easily fit into any of his eight categories and is therefore omitted. The second problem is his inclusion of 25:14, "they shall know my vengeance," which is not a proper recognition formula. [Note: all corrections are in non-bold italics.]

In agreement with the vast majority of contemporary Ezekiel scholars, Joyce regards the bulk of the occurrences of the formula as primary. The recognition formula is best interpreted as being integrally related to the contexts in which it occurs—that is, it is not easily detachable—and as a core, distinctive feature of the style and theology of the prophet. Joyce must be correct in his view that the formula of self-predication occurs in so many different parts of the Old Testament that "it would seem inappropriate to attempt to relate Ezekiel's use of the particular words 'I am Yahweh' exclusively to any one background."[146] Also attractive are his recommendations to consider the origin of the recognition formula as a whole and to pass over Zimmerli's attempts to establish separate and distinct settings in life for the formula's two parts.

Unfortunately, Joyce declines to take sides in the Zimmerli–Fohrer debate over whether Ezekiel's recognition formulae show a dependence upon a prophetic tradition going back to 1 Kings 20 or to the Mosaic tradition set down in the older Pentateuchal sources. He only goes so far as to suggest that important, but slim evidence points in favor of a background in Exodus.[147]

Any who wrestle with Ezekiel admit that the prophet's recognition formula speaks a "cryptic message," presented as it is normally without elaboration. Joyce asserts that its style of presentation "gives the formula a certain aura of mystery, which serves to highlight the theocentricity of Ezekiel's presentation."[148] He observes that the mystery can even involve ambiguity in the reader's mind about who is being addressed in a specific formula.

> . . . [T]he concern that it should be known that "I am Yahweh" is at times so pressing that the specific recipients of this revelation fade into relative obscurity and it becomes unclear precisely who is being addressed—in such cases we are forcefully reminded that the focus is upon the God who is known rather than upon those by whom he is known.[149]

Joyce rejects Reventlow's proposal that Ezekiel's prophecy reveals a positive hope that the nations will turn in allegiance to God. Using his chart, he shows that in no case is it said

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[146] Ibid., 92.

[147] Ibid., 155, note 27.

[148] Ibid., 94.

[149] Ibid.

that the nations will know "that I am Yahweh" when God delivers them. Nor do they come to that recognition when they observe Israel's punishment. There is no real evidence in Ezekiel that the nations are to turn in repentance and faith to Israel's God. With regard to those few passages where the nations come to "know" through Israel's deliverance, Joyce notes that Israel's deliverance always means (or is related to) judgment upon the nations. The formula is to be taken as "a rhetorical device, serving to highlight the central concern, which is the revelation of Yahweh."[150]

8. JOHN STRONG

Among those who provided both impetus and leadership first to the "SBL Ezekiel Consultation Steering Committee" and later to the "SBL Seminar on Theological Perspectives on the Book of Ezekiel" is Professor John T. Strong of Southwest Missouri State University. In 1995 he published an article which is noteworthy as the sole discussion since Zimmerli to focus largely upon the use of the recognition formula in Ezekiel.[151] Yet Strong's argument is not chiefly concerned with the refrain per se; rather it seeks to establish that Ezekiel's theological use of the refrain "is fully nationalistic and does not envision the eventual inclusion of the foreign nations in the covenant with Yahweh."[152]

Strong joins a long debate among those writing in the fields of biblical theology and OT interpretation over nationalism and theological universalism in the OT Scriptures. As we have seen already in this review of past scholarship, this issue has been repeatedly and vigorously taken up by Ezekiel specialists. Strong posits correctly that an evaluation of Ezekiel's theology regarding universalism must deal directly with the recognition formulae, which do speak of the nations coming to "know that I am Yahweh" (e.g., 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6 [secondary?]; 30:19). Is this "knowledge" the same as Israel's when she comes to

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[150] Ibid., 95.

[151] John Strong, "Ezekiel's Use of the Recognition Formula in His Oracles Against the Nations," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22.2 (1995): 115-33. This article, cited previously, developed out of his doctoral work entitled, "Ezekiel's Oracles Against the Nations Within the Context of His Message" (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1993).

[152] Strong, "Ezekiel's Use," 133.

"know that I am Yahweh" in her salvation (e.g., 34:27; 37:14; 39:28)? Is the meaning of the verb, ידע "to know," the same for the nations as for Israel?

Because Zimmerli has written the "definitive study of the recognition formula,"[153] John Strong begins with his interpretation. He shows that Zimmerli understood this knowledge as "coming about in the worshipping confession, Yahweh is God."[154] Strong says Zimmerli's interpreted Ezekiel's refrain as involving "an *experiental* [*sic*], *confessional knowledge* of Yahweh on the part of the subject."[155] Therefore, Ezekiel's theology in this one respect is comparable to Deutero-Isaiah's. Professor Strong dissents from Zimmerli's tentative conclusion and urges interpreters to consider Ezekiel's refrain as pointing to two different types of confession.

He takes Ezekiel 36:22-23 as a key text for unlocking the meaning of the formula as Ezekiel directs it toward the nations. It is key for two reasons. First of all, the refrain is used "with the foreign nations as the subject . . . outside of a foreign nation oracle."[156] Secondly, the recognition or acknowledgement of the nations is said to come when Yahweh acts למען שם "for the sake of [my] name." When one understands the significance of that name, Yahweh, and the meaning of the phrase למען שם, then the way is open "to understand what kind of knowledge of Yahweh Ezekiel intended when he placed the foreign nations as the subject of the recognition formula."

Much of Strong's article—pp. 120-29, out of pp. 115-33—expounds the meaning of למען שם, rather than the recognition formula, because he views it as foundational for his thesis that Israel was not only given Yahweh's name but "called to be Yahweh's name, that is, his testimony to the nations of his power."[157] Because Israel had failed to guard the

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[153] Ibid., 118.

[154] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 88.

[155] Strong, "Ezekiel's Use," 118. Emphasis his.

[156] Ibid., 120.

[157] Ibid., 127. Here Strong is building upon the Harvard dissertation of S. Dean McBride, "The Deuteronomic Name Theology" (1969) and the research of Frank Moore Cross on the divine name. See Cross, "The Religion of Canaan and the God of Israel," in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973). For a probing critical discussion of the exegetical basis for the "name theology," see the Cambridge dissertation of

honor of the name, Yahweh himself is moved to act so as to re-establish the testimony that he is the creator God who rules over chaos and also the Divine Warrior who triumphs over his enemies.[158] Ultimately, Yahweh's powerful actions, through which he is recognized by the nations, are both "for the sake of my name" and for the sake of Israel, who bears the name. Yahweh's actions are not for the sake of the nations. Rather, the nations will be brought to submission when they hear of Yahweh's victory over chaos on behalf of Israel. "If Israel is defeated, then the knowledge that Yahweh has power over chaos will have been lost. Again, the basic issue is not the conversion of the nations, but power."[159] Ezekiel's recognition formulae, thus interpreted, do not teach that the nations will come to worship Yahweh or be blessed in covenant with Yahweh.

How does Israel's apparent defeat in the exile provide a testimony to Yahweh's power? Does exiled Israel continue in her role as testimony? To answer these questions, Professor Strong guides the reader through Ezekiel 20 and its tripartite historical retrospective. Just as Yahweh once acted to create a nation as a testimony for his name, by redeeming Israel out of Egypt, so he is acting again to re-create the nation as a testimony to his power. The phrase למען שם explains Yahweh's purpose in the Exodus and in the Exile. The covenant God who determined to redeem a people, living among the nations, as a testimony, will once again redeem. The covenant God, who withheld destruction from his disobedient people and determined to bring them into a promised land, will keep his promise. "According to Ezekiel, the exile is not the destruction of Israel, but rather a fresh beginning."[160]

Strong argues that the nations will know Yahweh as the deity who controls chaos and works to restore Israel as his testimony. As the surrounding nations—Egypt, Ammon, Moab, and Edom—oppose Israel and the Divine Warrior's purposes with Israel, they are

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Ian Wilson, published as: *Out of the Midst of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy*, SBLDS 151 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

[158] Strong seems to combine a creation theology with the Divine Warrior motif, though the exegetical basis in Ezekiel for a creation theology is never made clear. When expounding a creation theology, he uses texts in Genesis and Exodus, where the theology is undoubtedly present.

[159] Ibid., 124.

[160] Ibid., 128.

punished. They are stopped so that Yahweh may "continue what he began with the exodus,"[161] and finally settle his covenant people in the land. The recognition formula is not used in the oracles against Tyre, Strong contends, because that sea-faring city-state was not aligned against Israel. "[T]he nationalistic content of the recognition formula seems only to have been appropriate in the context of battle between Yahweh and his enemies."[162]

In the article there are helpful links made to other Scripture texts, though Strong regularly speaks of "traditions" instead of "texts." When arguing his case that the "knowledge" of Yahweh spoken of in the recognition formula does not have the deliverance or covenant blessing of the nations in view, Strong appropriately turns to the use of the formula against Egypt in the Exodus narrative. Ezekiel's formula, it seems, should be interpreted in line with the formulae in Exodus.

> The events culminating in the creation of Israel are orchestrated to bring Pharaoh and Egypt to a knowledge of Yahweh's power as Creator. Yet Egypt is not depicted as worshipping Yahweh or joining Yahweh's nation. Rather, Israel, in its creation, testifies to Yahweh's power over Chaos, and Egypt is merely intended to accept this testimony submissively.[163]

This is a helpful approach and an example of intertextuality.

Readers may suggest some weaknesses in Strong's article. Repeatedly claims are made that Yahweh's actions לְמַעַן שְׁמִי, "for the sake of [my] name," are also for the sake of, or on behalf of, Israel. Yet Ezekiel's prophecy does not establish this tie. Strong does not appear to have taken into account the related texts in chapter 36 which incline the reader to a radically theocentric interpretation of לְמַעַן שְׁמִי and which explicitly deny the tie he seeks to make. "Thus says the Lord Yahweh, 'It is *not for your sake*, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went" (v. 22; cf. 36:32).

Strong also causes much weight of meaning to rest upon the phrase, לְמַעַן שְׁמִי, in his interpretation of the recognition formulae as used against the nations. Surely it is

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[161] Ibid., 130.

[162] Ibid., 132. Strong here shows the influence of Eichrodt and Zimmerli in his decision to treat the recognition formula against Tyre in 26:6 as secondary. More recent commentators, including Greenberg and Block, do not. Some may regard it as a weakness of the article to base a lengthy argument regarding Tyre upon a debatable redaction-critical decision.

[163] Ibid., 123-4.

problematic for his line of argument that לְמַעַן שְׁמִי does not appear in any of the oracles addressed to the nations. Nowhere do we read that Yahweh is acting to punish the nations "for the sake of my name." That formula, if we may call it that, is located exclusively in oracles addressed to Israel.

Yet another problem is the lack of explanation of how the nations will "know that I am Yahweh" through their punishment. Strong places an emphasis upon the nations' acknowledgement of Yahweh in his actions on behalf of Israel. It is difficult to see, in the years immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem in 587-586, how the punishment of Ammon serves the interests of Israel or promotes Israel's restoration as a testimony to God's power. Can the nations "know that I am Yahweh," without reference to Israel, in their own experience of Yahweh's dreadful judgment? A comparison of Joyce's category "A" and category "D" is instructive at this point (see Table 1); there is a much higher frequency of recognition formulae which associate the nations' acknowledgement of Yahweh with their punishment than with Israel's deliverance.

One may imagine that if Zimmerli were alive today he might offer a critique of Strong where the latter attempts to define the Name. Strong fills the name, Yahweh, with a certain content. For the nations to "know that I am Yahweh" is to know him as the Divine Warrior who initially, as Creator, brought order out of chaos; additionally they come to know him as the God of Israel who fights on behalf of his people. It seems clear that Strong has shifted away from Zimmerli's position that Yahweh's personal self-introduction is at the heart of the recognition formula. Self-introduction, Zimmerli insists, is "precisely that which it [the formula] intends," and that is why the formula always has the wording, אֲנִי יְהוָה, and never reads, "You shall know Yahweh," or "You shall know that he is Yahweh." Zimmerli's critique could apply to Strong:

> Yahweh's personal self-introduction . . . can only occur from his mouth. Thus any attempt to understand the strict statement of recognition in Ezekiel and elsewhere from the perspective of a meaning of the name disclosed by Exodus 3:14 is falsely directed from the very beginning; such attempts fail to recognize the mystery that cannot be reduced to a definition—and the irreversible direction of the process of self-introduction.[164]

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[164] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 153.

The best, most compelling case to be made for a wholly negative usage of the recognition formula in Ezekiel with reference to the nations will probably require an exegetical examination of all the formula's occurrences. This Strong does not attempt, perhaps for reason of article length. Regrettably, there is scarcely any discussion in the article about the origin of the formula, its varied usage, or its rhetorical purpose. Whatever the small deficiencies of the article, "Ezekiel's Use," Strong is largely successful in making his argument regarding the nationalistic use of the formula *against* the nations, and other scholars should take account of his findings.

9. DANIEL I. BLOCK

The recent evangelical commentary of Daniel Block is a high point of late twentieth century Ezekiel scholarship. Building upon Zimmerli, Leslie Allen's *Ezekiel 20–48*, and especially Greenberg's yet incomplete set, Block has produced an encyclopedic two-volume work (1997-8) of over 1700 pages. Here we will concern ourselves only with summarizing his conclusions regarding Ezekiel's "profound" recognition formulae, which he says number seventy-two[165] and dominate the prophecies.[166]

Block often shows his indebtedness to Zimmerli's mid-century essays. In several aspects of interpretation, he follows closely behind Zimmerli. First of all, Block believes that the proper line of interpretation is to emphasize the significance of the so-called *Selbstvorstellungsformel*, אני יהוה, within the structure of the recognition formula. Self-introduction is a key element in the larger formula. He writes that Zimmerli

> observes correctly that where the self-introduction formula is incorporated into the recognition formula, the real intention of an oracle is not to announce an event but rather to refer *through* the pronouncement to Yahweh's historical self-manifestation in his action, a manifestation that all observers are to recognize and acknowledge.[167]

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[165] Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39. Elsewhere he speaks of "87 occurrences of the recognition formula" (763), citing Zimmerli's appendix in *Ezekiel 2*, p. 556. The question of Zimmerli's true tally of formulae is discussed in chapter 3.

[166] Ibid., 36.

[167] Ibid., 38.

The self-introductory formula is of such importance to Block that he refuses to accept the common appositional rendering of אני יהוה דברתי as "I, Yahweh, have spoken."[168] It should, instead, be translated so as to preserve, not obscure, the self-introductory aspect: "I am Yahweh, I have spoken." This policy also holds where Ezekiel brings this formula and the recognition formula together: וידעתם כי אני יהוה דברתי, "Then you will know that I am Yahweh, I have spoken" (17:21). At this point, Block seems to have gone beyond Zimmerli, who was more inclined to accept the appositional rendering.

A second continuity with Zimmerli is Block's form-critical approach, though moving in a more conservative direction.[169] Perhaps we are justified in speaking of it as a "chastened form-criticism," which is used alongside more synchronic methods.[170] Block regularly uses Zimmerli's form-critical categories such as "word-event formula" and "proof-saying," occasionally employing alternate terminology such as "demonstration oracle." (One adjustment or refinement one could wish Block had made is the avoidance of the designation "pure form" for the shortest form of the recognition formula.) He follows Zimmerli in his understanding of the recognition formula, within the proof-saying structure, as a concluding statement[171] and as clueing the reader to the rhetorical intention of whole oracles, i.e., the acknowledgement of Yahweh.

Block breaks ranks with Zimmerli regarding the derivation of the recognition formula. Whereas, Zimmerli looks to a northern Israelite prophetic tradition, which is reflected in the text of 1 Kings 20 (holy war setting), as the influence upon Ezekiel, Block views the Exodus narratives as the source from which the formula is drawn. He also uses those narratives to help interpret Ezekiel's formulae. Even where he differs with Zimmerli, there yet remain

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[168] Ibid., 37-8. Zimmerli terms this the "formula for the conclusion of a divine saying" (*Ezekiel 1*, 26) or "Schlußformel des Gotteswortes" (*Ezekiel*, BK XIII/1, 40*).

[169] E.g., Daniel I. Block, "Ezekiel's Boiling Cauldron: A Form-critical Solution to Ezekiel XXIV 1-14," *VT* 41 (1991): 12-37.

[170] We are grateful for the discussion of such things as chiasms and panels. For a fine example of Block's sensitivity to final-form literary features, see his discussion of the balanced structure of the oracles against the nations in *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 4-5.

[171] Block says, "this formula usually signals the end of a demonstration oracle/proof saying in Ezekiel" (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, p. 131).

strong elements of continuity with Zimmerli, as Block stresses the idea of divine self-manifestation, the form-critical "proof-saying," and the fact that the revelation comes by the divine word within history.

> Drawing on the exodus narratives (cf. Exod. 6:6-9; 7:1, 5, 17), this formula transforms Yahweh's oracles from mere announcements of coming events into announcements of Yahweh's self-manifestation. They become prophetic proof-sayings, according to which the actions of God are designed to bring the observer to the recognition of Yahweh's person and his sovereign involvement in human experience. Ezekiel will offer no doctrinal speeches, no descriptions of Yahweh's nature. It is in the narrative of history that his character is proclaimed. This refrain calls on the hearer of Ezekiel's oracles to stand back and watch Yahweh act, whether it be in judgment or salvation, and then draw the obvious theological conclusions. Just as the deliverance of his people from Egypt centuries earlier had been intended to impress the Israelites, the Egyptians, and the world with the presence and character of Yahweh, so too will his acts of judgment on a rebellious people.[172]

Block's position, that "[u]nderlying Ezekiel's usage is a keen awareness of the traditional exodus narratives,"[173] is similar to the position of Haag, Fohrer, and Harner.

Daniel Block joins a growing chorus of contemporary Ezekiel specialists in denying that the prophecy foresees a positive, saving recognition of Yahweh among the nations. He says Ezekiel does not share Isaiah's "universalism and cosmic interest"; rather they "stand in sharpest contrast to the parochialism of Ezekiel."[174] What attention Ezekiel does pay to the nations is explained by their relationship to Israel. They are the *surrounding* nations, having had direct dealings with the covenant people.

> The oracles against the nations (chs. 25-32) leave no doubt about Yahweh's sovereignty over all, but the rise and fall of foreign powers have historical significance primarily to the extent that these events touch the fate of Yahweh's people (28:24-26). . . . He is indeed concerned that all the world recognize his person and his presence in their affairs, but his agenda is always focused on Israel.[175]

Block reminds his readers that Ezekiel's vision of a fully restored Israel provides room for non-Israelites, but only through "their incorporation into the new order," that is, their "adaptation to and integration into what is clearly Israelite society and culture."[176]

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[172] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 39. It is worth highlighting that Block speaks of the "exodus narratives," rather than a more amorphous exodus tradition.

[173] Ibid., 38.

[174] Daniel I. Block, "Ezekiel, Theology of," *NIDOTTE*, vol. IV: 618.

[175] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 47.

[176] Ibid., 47, footnote 3.

What does Block suggest is the meaning of the recognition formula in the oracles against the nations? How should we define the verb "to know" in such texts as Ezekiel 39:7, which says, וידעו הגוים כי אני יהוה קדוש בישראל, "then the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, holy in Israel"? Block seems to prefer the verb "acknowledge," as a rendering of ידע in these recognition formulae. Yahweh's intended goal is that even the proud pagans acknowledge him "as the sovereign Lord of their own history." The nations "must submit to the Lord of history," and be brought to "acknowledge him as supreme." For the nations, as well as for Israel, he is "the One behind all these events as the sovereign Yahweh."[177]

The single text which appears to give Professor Block pause is 29:13-16, where the Egyptians are said to "know that I am Yahweh" when they are regathered from captivity and resettled in the land of their origins. This sounds remarkably like the prophecies of deliverance and blessing earlier delivered to Israel (e.g., 20:41-42). Block identifies this text as "a modified restoration oracle."[178] In doing so, however, he does not seem to revise or reverse his considered opinion that theological universalism does not feature in Ezekiel's prophecy. In view of the other bracing oracles of judgment against Egypt, one may say that 29:13-16 reads as a moderation of judgment, rather than as a true salvation oracle. They are "restored" to become a "lowly kingdom," one which will never recover its lost glory and power of long ago. Even what seems like a gracious re-establishment of the Egyptian nation is for Israel's benefit, that she have a living reminder—in a continuing, diminished Egypt—of her misplaced trust and faithlessness. Block makes a good argument that Egypt's "preferential treatment," in comparison to the severe messages of destruction delivered to other neighboring countries, may be based on the far less serious charges Egypt faces. Egypt had only failed to deliver Israel. "Whatever its motives, Egypt had tried to prevent

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[177] These phrases are taken from *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, pp. 125, 128, 139, 144.

[178] Ibid., 144. It is here worth noting that Greenberg's exegesis of chapter 29 reaches much the same conclusion, though neither commentator apparently had opportunity to consult the other prior to publication of their second volumes. Greenberg (*Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 611) makes mention of Walter Vogels' lengthy article, "Restauration de l'Égypt et universalisme en Ez 29,13-16," *Biblica* 53 (1972): 473-94. In his own interpretation, Greenberg shies away from reading the text (with Vogels) as universalistic, and contends that "it expresses a deliberate judgment that takes Egypt's lesser guilt into consideration . . . ."

the collapse of Judah,"[179] while Ammon, Edom, etc. had tried to hasten the collapse. The *Schadenfreude* of the latter nations (25:2-3, 6)—not forgetting also their opportunistic attacks on the Jews (25:12, 15)—was an affront to Yahweh and was deemed to be deserving of severe judgment.[180]

10. Related Studies On Exodus & Isaiah

Parallel to the past research of Ezekiel's recognition formula, there have been studies of the formula as it occurs in the book of Exodus and elsewhere in the Old Testament. A few of the more recent of these are worth noting in passing. One of them, written by Marc Vervenne, deserves special mention because of its highly detailed nature and its ancillary discussion of the recognition formula in Ezekiel.

First of all, an article by Randall Bailey on the book of Exodus, though it includes the wording of the formula in its title, may be quickly passed over, because the recognition formula is scarcely discussed at all and because the article's thesis is muddled.[181] Secondly, Lyle Eslinger has contributed two studies to the discussion of the formula in Exodus. In his initial article ("Freedom or Knowledge"), he argues that the occurrences of the formulae indicate that the theme of "knowing Yahweh" is more central to the Exodus narrative than the theme of liberation. Redemption out of the house of bondage has as its goal the people's true knowledge of Yahweh and their freedom to worship him. Liberation is the

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[179] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, p. 145.

[180] Ibid., 17.

[181] Randall C. Bailey, "And they shall know that I am YHWH!": The P Recasting of the Plague Narratives in Exodus 7–11," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 22.1 (1994): 1-17. Bailey contends that there was an unsuccessful attempt by P to replace the liberation theme which was the thrust of the earlier sources (J, E) in the Exodus "plague narratives" (a nomenclature Bailey rejects). In P's recasting, what is stressed is a competition between YHWH and the gods of Egypt and a related call to piety (to know YHWH). The recognition formula is considered to be a marker of the Priestly school's "desire to supplant liberation thought" (17). What seems to have escaped Bailey's notice is the fact that, according to the conclusions of standard source critical analysis—e.g., Driver, Childs—the formula is just as prominent in J as it is in P. This completely overthrows both his general argument regarding the theological thrust of Exodus and his specific interpretation of the recognition formula's meaning and function in the narrative.

means to an end.[182] A later article ("Knowing Yahweh") briefly reviews the work of Zimmerli on the formula but focuses primarily upon the crux of Exodus 6:3 and the much-discussed solution of Moberly.[183] In Eslinger's proposed reworking of Moberly's thesis, the wording in Exodus 6:3, "by my name Yahweh I was not known," is best read as a variant of the formula, "you shall know that I am Yahweh." Eslinger says we must pay closer attention to the "collocation," *yd*ᶜ + *Yahweh.* Also, he says, as we realize "the technical nature of the phrase 'knowing Yahweh' in Exodus and especially Ezekiel,"[184] we cannot assume that "knowing Yahweh" means the same as "calling on the name of Yahweh." One asks Eslinger, what is the "technical nature of the phrase"? He contends that God is not claiming in Exodus 6:3 that the name had not been used previously, but that "no one had ever known him by the name Yahweh" through experiencing "his awesome interventions in human affairs."[185] In other words, the collocation only makes sense as a description of revelation received in the context of historical interventions such as the Exodus events.

Because Eslinger associates the recognition formula in Ezekiel with the formula's use in Exodus, there is the implication that the Exile/Restoration and the Exodus are events of the same order or class. Yahweh is intervening in awesome historical acts of judgment and deliverance, and in this context he will make himself known. Further, one can only "know

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[182] Lyle Eslinger, "Freedom or Knowledge? Perspective and Purpose in the Exodus Narrative (Exodus 1–15)," *JSOT* 52 (1991): 43-60. For a sharply contrasting study of the Exodus narratives, one not mentioned by Eslinger, see José Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression*, trans. John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974), 44ff., 78ff. Miranda does discuss the recognition formula and emphasizes the liberation theme.

[183] Lyle Eslinger, "Knowing Yahweh: Exodus 6:3 in the Context of Genesis 1 – Exodus 15," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, eds., L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard and J. P. Fokkelman, 188-98 (Assen: Van Gorcum; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1996). The work by R. W. L. Moberly is *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). The latter argues that Exodus 6:3 should be read in a straightforward fashion. The Patriarchs and other characters in the biblical story prior to Moses did not know the name Yahweh at all. The use of the divine name in the speech of characters in Genesis (4:1, 26, etc.) is anachronistic and "conveys the perspective of the Yahwistic storytellers, who are retelling originally non-Yahwistic traditions in a Yahwistic context" (Moberly, 70). Thus, a source-critical solution or a harmonization strategy (e.g., the Patriarchs knew the name but not its significance) is unnecessary.

[184] Eslinger, "Knowing Yahweh," 193.

[185] Ibid., 194.

that I am Yahweh" when that is the deity's announced intention and when the deity acts in history. Where Yahweh proclaims his name in explicit association with the prophesied events, there and only there can one "know that I am Yahweh." One may speak the name Yahweh without "knowing."

> Might not humans who can use the name reasonably be said to "know Yahweh"? Well Pharaoh certainly uses the name in Exod 5:2, but his is an ironic disclaimer of such knowledge in the same breath with which he utters the name. To use the name is not necessarily to know "I am Yahweh" according to the theological conventions at work here. The collocation *yd*ᶜ + *Yahweh* has, in biblical literature, an inflexible reference. It describes a unique cognitive state borne [*sic*] of a particular experience derived from special intervention by Yahweh in human affairs. So the statement made by Yahweh seems true for the patriarchal period that he describes in Exod 6:3.
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> Unfortunately, for divine purposes, the same truth persists for the remainder of biblical history (cf. Ezek 20). . . .[186]

Another one of Eslinger's most important points is a distinction between "salvation" and the "knowledge of Yahweh." He argues that "the salvation of Israel was not his [Yahweh's] primary purpose. The logic of the divine intervention is that knowledge of Yahweh comes before liberation from Egypt, both in fact and in priority."[187]

The above-mentioned study by Vervenne is entitled, "The Phraseology of 'Knowing YHWH' in the Hebrew Bible." It gives special attention to Isaiah but also provides a large amount of data on other Old Testament books, Exodus and Ezekiel included. The strengths of that study are less theological and more syntactical analysis, and Vervenne supplies a wealth of technical information for comparing language in different Bible books.[188] He is interested in all the Old Testament texts which speak of knowing Yahweh, not just the recognition formula.[189] With regard to the formula, Vervenne follows the procedure

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[186] Ibid., 196.

[187] Ibid., 195. One can argue with this claim, for the exodus narrative appears to connect the full recognition of Yahweh's power and authority, by the Egyptians and the Israelites both, with the parting of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian army (see Exodus 14:4-5, 11, 18, 25, 30-31).

[188] Marc Vervenne, "The Phraseology of 'Knowing YHWH' in the Hebrew Bible: A Preliminary Study of Its Syntax and Function," in *Studies in the Book of Isaiah* (Willem A. M. Beuken Festschrift), eds. J. Van Ruiten, M. Vervenne, 467-92 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 1997). Perhaps it was too ambitious to attempt in a single article to compile and synthesize all the Old Testament material on this rather broad topic. Vervenne's data on Ezekiel are slightly confusing at two or three points. E.g., He says on p. 474, the "recognition formula in the strict sense of the word appears most frequently in the book of Ezekiel (69x) . . ." In the very next sentence Vervenne tallies the formulae as follows: chapters 1–24: 36x; chapters 25–32: 19x; and chapters 33–39: 22x. The total, then, is 79x, not 69x.

[189] Therefore he discusses such passages as Elijah's prayer in 1 Kings 18:36-37: "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel . . . answer me, O Yahweh,

established by Zimmerli of dividing the refrain into two parts: "the expression of the act of knowing" (ידע כי), which he prefers to call *Erkenntnisaussage* with Zimmerli, and "the expression of the content of knowing" (though variable, is commonly אני יהוה), which he also terms *Erkenntnisinhalt.* Vervenne has strengthened the foundation laid by Zimmerli and others,[190] so scholarship in the future may build well.

D. Conclusion

In concluding this review of scholarship, we will briefly note some more important points of controversy or confusion in the literature and will analyze the similarities and differences among scholars on key interpretive issues. In addition, we will indicate how this study moves beyond work previously done and offers a fresh perspective on the literary and theological function of the recognition formulae in Ezekiel's prophecy.

It must be said at the outset of this section that there have been many encouraging developments in the course of scholarship on Ezekiel's recognition formula, especially over the last fifty years. Prior to Zimmerli's essays, especially in post World War I scholarship, the keynote formula was frequently rejected as a part of the original prophecy (Herrmann, Hölscher, Fohrer, May), with the result that little attention was paid to it. It was an accretion to be recognized and deleted, rather than a meaningful refrain to be interpreted in the

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answer me, that these people may know that you, O Yahweh, are God . . ." This dissertation will briefly discuss Elijah's prayer in chapter 5.

[190] E.g., Johannes Peter Floss, *Jahwe Dienen – Göttern Dienen: Terminologische, literarische und semantische Untersuchung einer theologischen Aussage zum Gottesverhältnis im Alten Testament*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge 45 (Köln: P. Hanstein, 1975). For more general studies—besides Vervenne, Floss, and others previously cited—on the theme of the knowledge of God in the Old Testament, see also Johannes Hänel, *Das Erkennen Gottes bei den Schriftpropheten*, BWAT 2.4 (1923), cited by Zimmerli ("The Knowledge of God," note 1); Sigmund Mowinckel, *Die Erkenntnis Gottes bei den alttestamentlichen Profeten*, Tilleggshefte Til Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift (Oslo: Grøndahl & Søns Boktrykkeri, 1941); G. Johannes Botterweck, *"Gott erkennen" im Sprachgebrauch des Alten Testamentes*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge 2 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein 1951); I. L. Seeligmann, "Erkenntnis Gottes und historisches Bewußtsein im alten Israel," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Walther Zimmerli Festschrift), eds. Herbert Donner, Robert Hanhart, Rudolf Smend, 414-45 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977); F. Gaboriau, "La connaissance de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament," *Angelicum* 45.2 (1968): 145-83; Robert C. Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (New York: Seabury, 1968); and the articles on ידע in *TDOT* (or *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*), and *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (*THAT*).

prophet's theology. Since Zimmerli's foundational essays, students of Ezekiel have recognized the refrain as both authentic and integral to the prophetic oracles, even if those scholars have respectfully quarrelled with a number of Zimmerli's conclusions regarding the source influencing Ezekiel's usage and the *Erweiswort* idea (Fohrer). Walther Zimmerli sparked debate on many interpretive issues, and his voice continues to stand out in today's debates.

Among the points of controversy or confusion in past scholarship, the following deserve special mention. (1) Further exegetical research is required regarding the exact number of occurrences of the formula in Ezekiel; there are rather wild discrepancies in scholars' data. Greenberg speaks of "some sixty occurrences," while Lang says it is "etwa achtzig Mal" that the recognition formula appears.[191] Several scholars agree upon the number 86 as the correct tally of formulae.[192] Even those who have done the most careful work on this topic offer different counts. Joyce says the formula "occurs fifty-four times in its basic form and over twenty more times with minor variations."[193] Zimmerli catalogues seventy-two refrains in his 1954 booklet, *Erkenntnis Gottes nach dem Buche Ezechiel*, but strangely makes reference to ninety-two formulae in the first appendix of his BKAT. Another individual scholar offering disparate counts is Vervenne (see footnote 188). There is need, then, to clear away some confusion at this and other exegetical fine points.

(2) Another contentious point is the source of Ezekiel's recognition formula. Prior to Zimmerli's publications, some scholars proposed that Ezekiel (or a later redactor) drew the refrain from Deutero-Isaiah and that the meaning of the refrain is consistent in both prophets (Blank, May). Others believed that all of Ezekiel's keynote formulae (Haag), or portions of Ezekiel with the keynote formula, such as chapter 20 (Blank again), revealed a

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[191] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 133; Lang, *Ezechiel*, 92.

[192] W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 176; Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 217. This tally of 86 represents the number of times the verb ידע occurs in the Qal stem within Ezekiel's prophecy, but fourteen of those occurrences have no association with the recognition formula. E.g., Ezek. 10:20: ". . . and I knew that they were the cherubim."

[193] Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 89.

dependence upon the Priestly document of Exodus. It was Zimmerli who first posited that an old prophetic *Gattung*, the "proof-saying," used in oracles against the nations and exemplified in 1 Kings 20, was the original context for the formula. Ezekiel has been influenced by that prophetic tradition from the Northern Kingdom. Since Zimmerli, many have followed closely in his steps (Carley, Hals, Strong) or cited his conclusions without evident dissent (Greenberg, Allen). Other have expressed a mild (Rendtorff, Joyce) or strong preference for the view that Ezekiel's recognition formula is drawn from the Exodus "narratives" or the "priestly traditions" now reflected in Exodus (Fohrer, Harner, Blenkinsopp, Eslinger, Block). This point of debate will be taken up in chapter four.

(3) Scholars are sharply divided over certain matters of theological interpretation. Where Ezekiel's recognition formula is addressed to the nations, does the phrasing, "know that I am Yahweh," indicate God's missionary purpose to reveal himself to foreign nations in salvation and covenant blessing? While some aver that it does (Reventlow, von Rad, Eichrodt, Ackroyd), others claim it does not (Keil, Cooke, Kaufmann, Darr, Strong, Block). More work is needed to discern what it means to "know" and also what is meant by the object clause, "I am Yahweh," in the context of oracles against the nations. Is the meaning of the recognition formula in oracles against the nations similar to the meaning of the formula when spoken to Israel? How does the meaning of the recognition formula in oracles of judgment compare with the meaning of the formula in oracles of deliverance or restoration?

(4) How is that phrase, אני יהוה, to be understood? Yes, there are certain, more literary issues here which scholars debate: (a) whether to separate it out as a part of the recognition formula with a distinct *Sitz im Leben* (Zimmerli) or not (Joyce); and (b) does it function as a formula of divine self-introduction (Zimmerli) or as an assertion of authority (Rendtorff)? Perhaps it could be read instead as a formula of "self-manifestation" (Odell) or a "self-declaratory statement" (Williams)? Others have spoken of a "Hoheitsformel" (Elliger) or an "Imponierformel" (Lang).[194] But alongside the literary issues there are also

[194] Margaret Sinclair Odell, "'Are You He of Whom I Spoke by My Servants the Prophets?' Ezekiel 38–39 and the Problem of History in the Neobabylonian Context" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1988), 130; Catrin H. Williams, *I Am He: The Interpretation of 'Anî Hû' in Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 113 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul

theological questions about the meaning of אני יהוה as a component within the recognition formula; those must especially occupy our attention in this study. May one properly interpret the name Yahweh as carrying certain theological freight? Emphasizing the holy war context, John Strong understands "Yahweh" to carry the meaning of "Divine Warrior" within the recognition formula. As already mentioned, this is in opposition to Zimmerli who insists that the formula always has self-introduction at its heart, and that the name represents "the mystery that cannot be reduced to a definition." Should the "self-predication statement" be read as a self-introduction, as self-presentation, as self-assertion? Many such questions call for discussion.

Eichrodt, Childs, Greenberg, Boadt, Block, and others have noted that the prophet Ezekiel shows an acquaintance with Israel's sacred literature. This study seeks answers to many of the questions posed above by exploring the literary relationship between Ezekiel and Exodus. This work moves beyond the existing scholarship (especially since Zimmerli) in two respects: its concentration upon the recognition formula and its thesis that the literary and theological function of the formula in Ezekiel is best illumined by identifying and interpreting the intertextual relationship between Ezekiel and Exodus.

Siebeck], 2000), 23; Karl Elliger, *Deuterojesaja*, 1. Teilband: Jesaja 40,1–45,7, BKAT XI/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 462ff.; Lang, *Ezechiel*, 95.

CHAPTER 3
DETAILS OF THE FORMULA'S USAGE IN EZEKIEL

In his chapter treating "The Knowledge of God according to the Book of Ezekiel," Zimmerli aptly refers to the "tenacious reoccurrence" (*hartnäckige Wiederholung*)[1] of the refrain, "and you (or they) shall know that I am Yahweh." Of the eighty-six (86) passages in Ezekiel where one finds the verb ידע (in Qal), the vast majority, seventy-two (72), are some variation on this "exceedingly important"[2] recognition formula. There are only fourteen[3] occurrences of ידע (Qal) in Ezekiel apart from the recognition formula.

It is clear from the chart on the following pages that Ezekiel contains an amazing variety of recognition formulae. They are not so "stereotyped" as some have thought. This study is restricted to those formulae employing the verb ידע with the attached clause כי אני יהוה.[4] Among those formulae, some have just these basic elements: verb and three-word clause; these compose the "strict form" of the refrain which will be discussed at length later in this chapter. Other formulae are expansions on that shorter form, and these too merit attention. At the bottom of the chart are added lists of "Other ידע Phrases Similar to the Formula," and "Other Phrases without ידע Similar to the Formula." Though these are not strictly within the purview of this dissertation, they are noted as bearing some relation to the recognition formula proper.

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[1] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 30 [*Gottes Offenbarung*, 42].

[2] Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel*, FOTL 19 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 32.

[3] 2:5; 10:20; 11:5; 14:23; 17:12; 19:7; 25:14; 28:19; 32:9; 33:33; 37:3; 38:14, 16; 39:23. A few of these strongly resemble the recognition formula (2:5; 14:23; 25:14; 33:33; 38:16), and one appears to develop from, and tie in with, an immediately preceding formula (39:23). In the remainder the subjects are: Ezekiel (10:20); Yahweh (11:5; 37:3); the people of Israel (17:12); the king of Judah, or second princely lion cub (19:7); international observers of Tyre's downfall (28:19); Pharaoh (32:9); and Gog (38:14).

[4] There is one exception. We may also include 20:26, the one occurrence of the formula in which the conjunction כי is replaced by אשר, but this is not considered as a true "strict form."

A. The Listing of Recognition Formulae and Related Phrases

1. THE "STRICT" RECOGNITION FORMULA AND EXPANSIONS—SECOND PERSON

וידעתם כי־אני יהוה

(A) And/then you shall know that I am Yahweh

19x — 6:7; 6:13 (NIV has third person plural); 7:4; 11:10; 11:12; 12:20; 13:14, 21, 23 (21 and 23 have וידעתן); 14:8; 15:7; 20:38; 20:42, 44; 25:5; 35:9; 36:11; 37:6, 13

וידעת כי־אני יהוה

(B) And/then you (singular) shall know that I am Yahweh

4x — 16:62; 22:16; 25:7; 35:4

וידעתם כי אני אדני יהוה

(C) And/then you shall know that I am Lord Yahweh

3x — 13:9; 23:49; 24:24

לדעת כי אני יהוה אלהיכם

(D) So that you will know that I am Yahweh your God

1x — 20:20 (with infinitive construct)

וידעתם כי אני יהוה דברתי

(E) And/then you shall know that I am Yahweh, I have spoken (or "that I, Yahweh, have spoken")

2x — 17:21; 37:14; cf. 5:13

וידעתם כי אני יהוה מכה

(F) And/then you shall know that I am Yahweh, who smites (or "[it is] I, Yahweh, who smites")

1x — 7:9

וידעתם כי־אני יהוה שפכתי חמתי עליכם

(G) And/then you shall know that I, Yahweh, have poured out my wrath upon you (or "that I, Yahweh, have poured")

1x — 22:22

וידעת כי־אני יהוה שמעתי את־כל־נאצותיך אשר אמרת

(H) And/then you (singular) shall know that I am Yahweh, I have heard all the contemptible things you have said (or "I, Yahweh, have heard all the contemptible things . . .")

1x — 35:12

2. The "Strict" Recognition Formula and Expansions—Third Person

וידעו כי־אני יהוה

(I) And/then they shall know that I am Yahweh

23x — 6:14; 7:27; 12:15, 16; 24:27; 25:11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23; 29:9, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15; 33:29; 34:27; 35:15; 36:38; 38:23; 39:6

למען אשר + ידעו אשר אני יהוה

(J) So that + they would know that I am Yahweh

1x — 20:26 (with Qal imperfect and אשר instead of כי)[5]

וידעו כי־אני יהוה לא אל־חנם דברתי לעשות להם הרעה הזאת

(K) And/then they shall know that I am Yahweh; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them (NIV rendering) (or "They shall know that I, Yahweh, did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them")

1x — 6:10

וידעו כי אני אדני יהוה

(L) And/then they shall know that I am Lord Yahweh

2x — 28:24; 29:16

וידעו כי אני יהוה אלהיהם

(M) And/then they shall know that I am Yahweh their God

2x — 28:26; 39:28

וידעו בית ישראל כי אני יהוה אלהיהם

(N) And/then the house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh their God

1x — 39:22

וידעו כל־ישבי מצרים כי אני יהוה

(O) And all that live in Egypt shall know that I am Yahweh

1x — 29:6

וידעו הגוים כי־אני יהוה

(P) And/then the nations shall know that I am Yahweh

1x — 36:23

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[5] Note the discussion below of this formula's absence in the LXX and the questions raised by scholars about it being secondary.

וידעו הגוים כי אני יהוה מקדש את־ישראל

(Q) And the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, I make Israel holy (or "that I, Yahweh, make Israel holy")

1x — 37:28

וידעו הגוים כי־אני יהוה קדוש בישראל

(R) And/then the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, the Holy One in Israel (or "that I, Yahweh, am the Holy One in Israel")

1x — 39:7

וידעו הגוים אשר ישארו סביבותיכם כי אני יהוה בניתי

(S) And/then the nations around you that remain shall know that I am Yahweh, I have rebuilt (or "that I, Yahweh, have rebuilt")

1x — 36:36

וידעו כי־אני יהוה דברתי בקנאתי בכלותי חמתי בם

(T) And/then they shall know that I am Yahweh, I have spoken in my rage when I spend my wrath against them (or "that I, Yahweh, have spoken in my rage . . .")

1x — 5:13

וידעו כי אני יהוה אלהיהם אתם

(U) And they shall know that I am Yahweh their God, I am with them (or "that I, Yahweh their God, am with them")

1x — 34:30

לדעת כי אני יהוה מקדשם

(V) So they would know that I am Yahweh, I make them holy (or "that I, Yahweh, made /make them holy")

1x — 20:12 (with infinitive construct)

וידעו כל־עצי השדה כי אני יהוה השפלתי עץ גבה

(W) And all the trees of the field shall know that I am Yahweh, I bring down the tall tree (or "that I, Yahweh, bring down the tall tree . . .")

1x — 17:24

וידעו כל־בשר כי אני יהוה הוצאתי חרבי מתערה

(X) And all people shall know that I am Yahweh, I have drawn my sword from its scabbard (or "that I, Yahweh, have drawn my sword from its scabbard")

1x — 21:5 (MT 21:10)

3. Other ידע Phrases Similar To The Recognition Formula

וידעו כי נביא היה בתוכם

And they shall know that a prophet has been among them

2:5; 33:33

וידעתם כי לא חנם עשׂיתי את כל־אשׁר־עשׂיתי בה נאם אדני יהוה

And you shall know that I have done nothing in it without cause, declares the Lord Yahweh

14:23

וידעו את־נקמתי נאם אדני יהוה

And they shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord Yahweh

25:14

למען דעת הגוים אתי בהקדשׁי בך

So that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you

38:16 (with infinitive construct)

וידעו הגוים כי בעונם גלו בית־ישׂראל

And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into exile for their sin . . .

39:23

4. Other Phrases Without ידע Similar To The Formula

וראו כל־בשׂר כי אני יהוה בערתיה לא תכבה

All flesh shall see that I am Yahweh, I have kindled it, it will not be quenched (or ". . . that I, Yahweh, have kindled it; it will not be quenched")

20:48 *(MT 21:4)*, cf. 39:21

וראו כל־הגוים את־משׁפטי אשׁר עשׂיתי ואת־ידי אשׁר־שׂמתי בהם

. . . And all nations shall see my judgment which I execute and my hand which I lay upon them.

39:21

B. Conclusions Regarding the Refrain's Usage

1. THE SHORTER "STRICT FORM" AND THE "EXPANSIONS"

In scholarly literature the recognition formulae are typically separated as to their usage into several categories, with special attention given to the "basic form"[6] or "formally strict version" (*festen formalen Geprägtheit*).[7] It seems best to follow that same pattern here. Besides the basic form, there are many longer or expanded formulae. Use of the term "expanded" is meant merely to be phenomenological, descriptive only of its enlarged form and not indicating derivation from the strict form. From the vantage point of the modern reader, the longer forms may be categorized as expansions *on* the basic form without stipulating that they are expansions *of* the basic form in a genetic sense.

Most important to the Bible interpreter is the shorter form,[8] "and they [or you] shall know that I am Yahweh" (see categories A, B and I). Compared with the expanded forms, the shorter "strict form" predominates with forty-six[9] out of seventy-two total recognition formulae.[10] That simple, shorter refrain is evenly divided between those occurrences having

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[6] Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response*, 89.

[7] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 100. Hossfeld chooses to use the adjective *"streng"* (*Untersuchungen*, 41).

[8] The designation, "short form" (or *Kurzform*), has been used by Hans Ferdinand Fuhs in his commentary, *Ezechiel 1–24* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1986) p. 41. One also discovers it being used in English within the translation of the *TDOT* article on ידע by G. Botterweck (*TDOT*, vol. 5: 471). This designation, "short form," is excellent because it is simply descriptive and does not—as with other terms like "pure form" (*"reiner Form,"* Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 57*)—beg the question with regard to issues of origin and development. The prime difficulty in using the designation "short form" is Zimmerli's application of the term in discussing the "formula of self-introduction" (אני יהוה). The terms "shorter form" and "strict form" will, instead, be employed in this dissertation.

[9] Readers familiar with Zimmerli's research may recall that he identifies 54 recognition formulae as the "pure form" (*Ezekiel 1*, 38; *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 57*), to be distinguished from expanded forms. What explains his larger number than the 46 reported here? He employs a broader definition of pure/shorter form and includes several categories (C, J, L, O, P above) not allowed in this study's definition (ידע Qal perfect, *waw* consecutive + כי אני יהוה). For example, Zimmerli includes refrains which expand the object clause with the very common "double designation of God" (*Ezekiel 2*, p. 558) as אדני יהוה.

[10] The entire list of Ezekiel's recognition formulas ought to be given the reader, a list in consecutive order and more convenient than the lengthy chart included in this chapter. The seventy-two refrains are: 5:13; 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 9, 27; 11:10, 12; 12:15, 16, 20; 13:9, 14, 21, 23; 14:8; 15:7; 16:62; 17:21, 24; 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44; 21:5 (21:10 MT); 22:16, 22; 23:49; 24:24, 27; 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15; 33:29; 34:27, 30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:11, 23, 36, 38; 37:6, 13, 14, 28; 38:23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28.

second person (twenty-three total) and third person verbs (also twenty-three). When one takes into account the entire range of formulae, thirty-one verbs are second person, and thirty-nine are in the third person.[11]

Among the twenty-six formulae which differ from the strict "shorter form" and which show a wide range of permutations, nine are verbally expanded (e.g., "they shall know that I, Yahweh, did not threaten in vain . . ").[12] In a larger total of fifteen cases the formula is expanded nominally.[13] These may be expansions either of the subject who recognizes (e.g., "*all who live in Egypt* shall know . . .") or of the divine predicate who is recognized (e.g., ". . . that I am Yahweh *their God*"). The recognition formula is expanded with a predicate participle in three places (e.g., ". . . know that I, Yahweh, strike").[14] The reader must take note of the fact that some individual refrains are expanded in a couple of ways; for example, with the refrain in 17:24 there is both verbal and nominal expansion (see category W). Two other formulae differ from the shorter refrain in unique ways: 34:30 forms the predicate with a prepositional phrase,[15] and 20:26[16]—as noted in a previous footnote—replaces the conjunction כִּי with אֲשֶׁר, which is the less frequently used conjunction introducing the subordinate, object clause throughout the Old Testament.[17] (This study discusses below the text-critical problem of 20:26.)

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[11] In addition to these seventy, two recognition formulas employ the Qal infinitive construct: 20:12 (third person understood from the context) and 20:20 (second person understood).

[12] 5:13; 6:10; 17:21; 17:24 (also nominally expanded); 21:5 (21:10 MT, also nominally expanded); 22:22; 35:12; 36:36; 37:14. (These comprise categories E, G, H, K, S, T, W, X.)

[13] 13:9; 17:24 (also verbally expanded); 20:20; 21:5 (21:10 MT, also verbally expanded); 23:49; 24:24; 28:24; 28:26; 29:6; 29:16; 34:30; 36:23; 39:7 (also adjectivally expanded); 39:22; 39:28. (These comprise categories C, D, L, M, N, O, P, R, U, W, X.)

[14] 7:9; 20:12; 37:28. (These comprise categories F, Q, V.)

[15] Category U.

[16] Category J.

[17] *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd edition, ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), §157a; Bruce K. Waltke, and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), §38.8.d.

2. Confirming The Total Number Of Formulae In Ezekiel

Regrettably, at the very conclusion of his commentary, Zimmerli brought confusion to all students of Ezekiel with regard to the tally of recognition formulae. That confusion needs to be cleared away, if possible. Earlier, in his essays published in the 1950s and in the introduction to his commentary, he had carefully delineated seventy-two refrains and cataloged the various formulations (strict form and expansions). He also discussed closely related texts such as 20:48 [MT 21:4] where we read ראה instead of ידע.[18] That research by Zimmerli has informed, and has also been confirmed in, this present study, with a few refinements. However, in an appendix (late 1968) to the second volume of his exhaustive commentary, he discussed the "dual designation of God" and made a surprising reference to "the *five* cases of אדני יהוה in some recognition formulae in the proof saying (13:9; 23:49; 24:24; 28:24; 29:16)" and the "overwhelming majority of *eighty-seven* (including 20:5, 7, 19) recognition formulae which have simple יהוה."[19]

There are several problems which arise from Zimmerli's commentary appendix and the quote which has just been selected out. (1) First of all, the reader is surprised at the much,

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[18] Zimmerli comes quite close to regarding this text as a true recognition formula: "Unusual in the recognition formula is not only the variation of the customary ידע to ראה . . ." (*Ezekiel 1*, 424). In listing all the formulae, however, Zimmerli excludes 20:48 (MT 21:4) and arrives at the same number of recognition formulae recognized by this dissertation: 72. See "The Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel" (previously cited), especially pp. 30-31 and notes 5-9. "In order to be thorough, we need to *include within the context of this form of speech* one or perhaps two passages in which the verb *yd'* is replaced by *r'h* (to see), a term frequently used as its parallel" (31, emphasis added). Zimmerli ultimately concludes that the phrases with ראה are "analogous formations" (31). *HALOT* (s.v. ידע) lists several texts in which the two verbs are used together in a synonymous fashion: 1 Sam. 12:17; 24:12; 1 Kings 20:7; 2 Kings 5:7; Jer. 2:19; one may add to this list additional texts such as Is. 5:19. For a discussion of ידע and ראה as frequent "synonymous readings" which are best read together, see Shemaryahu Talmon, "Synonymous Readings in the Textual Traditions of the Old Testament," in *Studies in the Bible*, ed. Chaim Rabin, 335-83, Scripta Hierosolymitana 8 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961).

[19] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 556 [emphasis added]. There is potential grammatical ambiguity in the English translation: i.e., does the subordinate clause, "which have simple יהוה," have *majority* or *recognition formulae* as its antecedent? There is quite a difference between saying "the majority (greater portion) of 87 formulae which contain simple יהוה," and "the 87 formulae which contain simple יהוה." The German is clearer (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/2, 1250-51), and a fuller citation is in order. "Man möchte danach fragen, ob auch die 5 Fällen von אדני יהוה in einigen Erkenntnisformeln des Erweiswortes (13:9; 23:49; 24:24; 28:24; 29:16) als geschlossene Gruppe zusammenzunehmen seien. Ihnen steht aber eine überwältigende Mehrzahl von (mit Einrechnung von 20:5, 7, 19) 87 Erkenntnisformeln gegenüber, die einfaches יהוה enthalten." Zimmerli here specifies that the 87 formulae with simple יהוה must be added to the 5 with אדני יהוה, resulting in a total of 92 recognition formulae in Ezekiel.

much larger number of 92 (87+5) total recognition formulae in Ezekiel. What explains the discrepancy between Zimmerli's earlier count of 72 and the later tally of 92? There almost certainly was not a typographical error, with "87" appearing instead of "67" (67+5=72); we know this for two reasons. Later in that appendix there is another reference to the 87 recognition formulae "without the addition of אדני." Also, the passages which Zimmerli included in the high count of 87—Ezekiel 20:5, 7, 19—had never been included among those texts which earlier comprised his list of 67 formulae without אדני. (2) Secondly, though the discrepancy in Zimmerli's writings on this point is obvious, the Göttingen professor never explained it. Also, he gave no clues as to how he may have redefined "Erkenntnisformel" more broadly so as to expand the range of phrases he includes in his tally. (3) Even by including all the phrases in Ezekiel which are similar to the recognition formula, as defined in both Zimmerli's early essays and in this dissertation, the reader still cannot find 92 formulae which contain the divine name. Including all the previously defined *Erkenntnisformeln*, all the related phrases which contain the divine name יהוה, and all the other texts in Ezekiel which contain "knowing Yahweh" language, one strains to reach, and falls short of, even the number eighty. (4) It appears to be impossible to reconcile Zimmerli's earlier and later figures.

In this dissertation, Zimmerli's initial work, which was far more detailed, complete, and focused, will be reckoned as Zimmerli's true position and as providing his most reliable conclusions. (That initial work is also the most cited in the scholarly literature on the recognition formula.) We urge that the data and the conclusions based upon them, which were established in approximately 120 pages of Zimmerli's most programmatic work,[20] should not be overturned by a pair of puzzling references in an appendix to his commentary. At this point it is also important to take note that many scholars have not been so strict about the final tally of 72 formulae. Even Walther Zimmerli himself will sometimes name as *Erkenntnisformeln* some among those eight texts which are related to the recognition

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[20] Here we have in mind especially the following discussions of the recognition formula (all previously cited): "The Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel"; "The Word of Divine Self-Manifestation (Proof-Saying), A Prophetic Genre"; and the "Introduction," pp. 36-41 in *Ezekiel 1* [*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 55*-62*].

formula but which do not exactly fit his definition of the formula (see A.3-4. above). For example, when he comes to expound 2:5 in his commentary, he writes, "Zum erstenmal begegnet hier eine der für das Buch Ez in besonderer Weise charakteristischen Erkenntnis-formulierungen."[21] We might also mention in this regard Lang, who follows Hossfeld in adding the eight "related phrases" to the standard 72 formulae to reach a count of 80.[22]

3. The Subjects Who Come To "Know That I Am Yahweh"

Which subjects are said to "know that I am Yahweh" in Ezekiel? In answering this question, one again confronts the great variety in the formulations of the refrain. In the majority of the recognition formulae (46 of 72), Israel is the subject of the verb ידע. But Israel is denoted in different ways within the oracles which include the formula: "children of Israel,"[23] the "House of Israel,"[24] the "Land of Israel"[25] or "the people of the land."[26] Jerusalem and its near environs are singled out in some oracles,[27] or there may be a joint reference to Jerusalem and the rest of the population of the land: "those living in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel" (12:19). Both the exiled Jews (24:24) and those who had remained in the land (33:27ff.)—only to be judged later—would come to know Yahweh. Certain individuals or special classes among the Israelites receive judgment oracles with attached recognition formulae; examples would be the "foolish prophets" (chapter 13) and "the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their imagination" (מלבהן), "the prince in Jerusalem" (12:10ff.). The generation of Israelites who left Egypt under Moses is

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[21] *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 73. See also his discussion of 20:48 (MT 21:4) in *Ezekiel 1*, pp. 315, 424 (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 322, 466), and of 39:21 in *Ezekiel 2*, p. 319 (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/2, 968).

[22] Lang (*Ezechiel*, 92) speaks of the formula occurring "etwa achtzig Mal"; Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen*, 40-46; cf. Odell ("Are You He," 126-63).

[23] Children/sons of Israel: 6:5ff.

[24] The house of Israel: See 11:5ff.; 14:6ff.; 22:17ff.; 24:21ff.; 36:37-38; 39:22.

[25] The land: 7:1-9;

[26] Inhabitants of the land: 7:7; the people of the land: 7:27; 12:19f.; etc.

[27] For "Jerusalem," see 5:13; 12:10ff.; 15:6-7; 22:16; see also references to the city in 11:2-12; 16:2.

the subject in 20:12, 20 and 26. Metaphorical subjects who "know" include "Oholah and Oholibah" (23:49); "the mountains of Israel" (36:8-12); the "dry bones" (37:6, 13); and "all the trees of the field" (17:24). The last of these is almost certainly a reference to the surrounding nations (compare chapter 31), who will "know that I am Yahweh" as God acts to plant or bring down a "tree" in the community of nations.

Scholars count about twenty-six (26) recognition formulae in Ezekiel which speak of the nations knowing Yahweh. There is a rather full list of named nations surrounding Israel who come to recognize Yahweh through his actions.[28] In several places "the nations" (הגוים) in general are said to come to "know that I am Yahweh."[29] The oracles against the nations mention individuals such as Pharaoh (29:2); the leader (נגיד) of Tyre (28:2); and the mysterious Gog (גוג נשיא ראש משך ותבל), but no formula in Ezekiel reads, "and he shall know that I am Yahweh." In one or two places, there is uncertainty whether the refrain has the nations or Israel as the subject who recognizes Yahweh; see 28:26, which I argue below is spoken to Israel.

Various experiences lead to the recognition of Yahweh. Those in Israel who "know" may be the slain (6:7), or they may be those who observe the judgment of death on others but who apparently survive (14:8), perhaps in exile (6:8-10; 12:16). They may be those already in exile who hear the news reports of Jerusalem's destruction (24:24). Those who recognize Yahweh may also be the Israelites who finally experience a new Exodus out of the nations where they are scattered (20:42), though some of these—like the generation that left Egypt (Num. 14:23) and Moses (Deut. 4:21)?—will not be allowed entry into the land of Israel (20:38). Those who do enter the land (39:28) will be delivered from malicious neighbors and wild beasts (28:24; 34:25-31). The experiences of the nations which lead to the recognition of Yahweh are, likewise, quite varied. They could be ghastly experiences: the plague (28:23); the destruction of cities (25:5); the obliteration of the memory of the nation

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[28] That list of nations seems quite complete: Ammon (25:5, 7); Moab (25:11); Philistia (25:17); Tyre (26:6); Sidon (28:22, 23); Egypt (29:6, 9, 16; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15); Mt. Seir–Edom (35:4, 9, 12, 15); the nations (36:23, 36; 37:28; 38:23; 39:7); Magog (39:6). The occurrence of the formula in the oracle against Tyre is disputed by some; see, e.g., Strong, "Ezekiel's Use," 119, and Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, p. 33.

[29] See 36:23, 36; 37:28; 38:23; 39:7; compare 38:16 and 39:23.

(25:10); slaughter (26:6). On the other hand, the nations could also come to recognize Yahweh by his gracious restoration of Israel (36:36) and Israel's sanctification (37:28).

Reviewing all the formulae, both simple and expanded, one finds that verbs taking a singular subject are found a total of five times (16:62; 22:16; 25:7; 35:4; 35:12). These verbs are all second person (וידעת), and all refer to nation-states. The first two occurrences are the "shorter form" of the refrain. With only three exceptions—all of them located in chapter twenty (verses 12, 20, and 26)—the recognition formula is always found in the Qal perfect with *waw* consecutive. The two refrains with infinitive constructs (20:12, and 20) stand apart from the rest of the formulae because they do not prophesy a future recognition; instead, they look back and interpret redemptive history.

4. Literary Context, Genre & Syntactical Analysis

Without exception, the recognition formula in Ezekiel occurs in divine utterances which announce God's acts on the plane of history, intervening in human affairs. Though other Old Testament books do refashion the refrain with the result that it loses its character as direct divine speech,[30] Ezekiel does not. He never reports, "Yahweh will do thus and such, and they will know *he* is Yahweh." We never read in Ezekiel, "then you will know Yahweh" (Hosea 2:20 [MT 2:22]).

The student of Ezekiel's prophecy also observes that the formula—and the "proof-saying" structure (*Gattung*) of which it is said to be a part—may be found in poetic as well as prosaic passages. Scholars, however, disagree over the amount of poetry found in Ezekiel and the number of recognition formulae in a poetic context.[31] This may be because, as Zimmerli says, "we may reckon at many points in Ezekiel with an elevated prose, which does not move in a rough meter, but allows free variation. It has some metrical features,

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[30] Compare Deut. 4:35; Isaiah 19:21.

[31] The editors of *BHS* regard six recognition formulas as being set in a poetic context (7:4, 9, 27; 29:6; 32:15; 35:4). Zimmerli's commentary counts three formulas in a poetic style (7:4, 9, 27), while the NIV translators—following Kittel's third edition of *Biblia Hebraica*—have discerned four (28:23; 30:8; 30:19; 32:15). There is no agreement among these three on even a single formula being set in poetry.

aiming to run in double twos and double threes."[32] The number of formulae found in a poetic context is limited because poetry was not this prophet's usual style. The reader finds far less poetry than in the other major prophets, especially Isaiah.

Though there can be some danger in focusing unduly on rhetorical form and the genius of the prophetic messenger in a book which is so extraordinarily theocentric, it should be noted that Ezekiel does adopt various compositional styles. He delivers visions (chapters 1–3; 8–11:4; 37:1-14; 40–48), lengthy allegories (chapters 16 and 23), parables (chapters 17 and 24); he sings laments (chapter 19), and he records arresting, symbolic actions (chapters 4, 5, 12, 24, and 37:15ff.).[33] Generally speaking, one is less likely to find the recognition formula in these sections (see Tables 4 and 5). The one noticeable exception would be the famous vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14), which includes a high concentration of refrains (3). Where the recognition formula is found in these visions, allegories, and sign-act passages, the formula usually comes at the conclusion without interrupting the vision, allegory, or fable as a speech-unit (e.g., 16:62). In fact, the refrain where it occurs normally appears at the conclusion of an oracle segment. Only about sixteen times does the distinct literary unit in which a recognition formula is found continue beyond that target statement: 6:10, 13; 11:12; 12:15; 13:14; 15:7; 16:62; 20:42; 30:8, 25; 34:27, 30; 35:12; 36:36; 37:13; 39:28. Ezekiel may extend the oracle beyond the refrain with an infinitive clause introduced by the preposition ב (6:13; 12:15; 15:7; 20:42, etc.).

Two details of the refrain's usage stand out. The recognition formula fails to appear even once in the vision of the last nine chapters. How does the interpreter explain this fact? Can it be adequately explained by the eschatological nature of the vision which looks forward to God's plan of restoration for his people, the people who presumably have come to "know that I am Yahweh"? Is the absence of the formula in 40–48 perhaps to be explained by the pronounced shift away from prophecies of Yahweh's intervention in history? The second surprising detail is Babylon's absence on the list of nations which will

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[32] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 40. One of his conclusions, considering the lack of poetic material, is "that Ezekiel belongs to a later phase of prophecy, which is no longer determined throughout by the spoken word, delivered publicly" (p. 41).

[33] Zimmerli cleverly notes that the visions in Ezekiel "are always followed by a section which speaks of sign-actions" (*Ezekiel 1*, 73). The exception to this rule would be the vision reported in chapters 40–48.

recognize Yahweh through divine judgment. Why, considering the brutality of Babylon's army (2 Kings 25) and the sorrows visited upon God's people through the Babylonian exile (Psalms 79 and 137), is that nation excluded from the list? One answer could be Babylon's place in providence as God's sword of judgment, as explained by this prophetic book; see chapter 21 and 30:25: וידעו כי־אני יהוה בתתי חרבי ביד מלך־בבל.

Many scholars have commented on Ezekiel's use of numerous "stereotyped" phrases besides the most familiar recognition formula.[34] The prophet will occasionally join the formula with another of his characteristic phrases to form interesting compounds. To cite but one example, chapter seventeen's parable of the two eagles and the transplanted vine concludes with the declaration, "I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will do it" (17:24). But a few lines earlier, in 17:21, this common asseveration[35] is combined with the recognition formula: "And you shall know that I am Yahweh, I have spoken." The reader finds much the same expansion in 5:13 and 37:14.

Most—fifty-two—of the recognition formulae are to be found in passages announcing Yahweh's judgment. One should take special note of the fact that only in Ezekiel does the Bible reader find the recognition formula used in the context of a message of judgment against Israel. No other Old Testament book has this phenomenon. The remaining twenty formulae in Ezekiel promise deliverance or covenant blessing, and these blessings, interestingly, are only to be shown to Israel.[36] In a few of these twenty occurrences, the nations are said to "know that I am Yahweh," but the recognition will come as the גוים observe how the Lord deals graciously with his own people and how Yahweh has acted to sanctify his name.

The oracles of judgment have two additional, important features. First of all, they contain all of those phrases related to the recognition formula which replace the phrase

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[34] Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, cited previously, helpfully lists many of these oft-repeated phrases on pages 297-8. Among them are: "son of man," "disperse among the nations," "pour out my fury upon," and "see, I am against you."

[35] The phrase, "I, Yahweh, have spoken," is found in 5:17; 21:17, 32 (MT 22, 37); 22:14; 24:14; 26:14; 30:12; 34:24; and 36:36.

[36] 16:62; 20:12; 20:20; 20:42; 20:44; 28:24; 28:26; 29:21; 34:27; 34:30; 36:11; 36:23; 36:36; 36:38; 37:6; 37:13; 37:14; 37:28; 39:7; 39:28.

אני יהוה with another object clause (see A.3 above). An example would be 25:14 which reads, "And they shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord Yahweh." Secondly, the oracles of judgment, whether spoken to Israel or the nations, never include a recognition formula, addressed to the judged,[37] which reads, ". . . shall know that I am Yahweh your (or their) God." The expansion of the keynote formula with the additional "your God" or "their God" only occurs in oracles of deliverance addressed to Israel.[38]

The phrase, אני יהוה, which the form-critics commonly term the "self-introductory (or, better, self-presentation) formula" (*Selbstvorstellungsformel*),[39] is quite prevalent in the Old Testament. There is also widespread evidence for its use throughout the ANE, in the mouth of both deities and kings.[40] Karl Elliger and Zimmerli[41] have shown that the "short form" and longer form (אני יהוה אלהיך) of this Old Testament formula frequently follow a law or series of laws in the book of Leviticus (especially chapters 18–26), almost as a divine signature. On occasion the formula can function as a preamble to a series of laws; examples of this usage would be Exodus 20:2; Leviticus 18:2; and Deuteronomy 5:6—the

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[37] This is an important qualification because Israel in two places (28:26 and 39:22) is said to "know that I am Yahweh their God" when Yahweh punishes the nations (which may be reckoned a deliverance for Israel).

[38] These are found in the closely related categories "E" and "H" in Paul Joyce's chart. See 20:20; 28:26; 34:30; 39:22, 28.

[39] Yet another proposal is *Offenbarungsformel.* See Heinrich Zimmermann, "Das absolute Εγω ειμι als die neutestamentliche Offenbarungsformel," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 4 (1960): 54-69, 266-76. Zimmermann makes reference in this article to his 1951 Bonn dissertation, which dealt at length with the Old Testament (unavailable to me).

[40] Among the more important studies of the "I-statement," most of which relating ANE religious texts to so-called Second Isaiah, see Arno Poebel, *Das appositionell bestimmte Pronomen der 1. Pers. Sing. in den westsemitischen Inschriften und im Alten Testament*, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Assyriological Studies 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932); H.-M. Dion, "Le genre littéraire sumérien de l'«hymne à soi-même» et quelques passages du Deutéro-Isaïa," *RB* 74 (1967): 215-34; Jan Bergman, *Ich bin Isis: Studien zum memphitischen Hintergrund der griechischen Isisaretalogien*, Historia Religionum 3 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1968); Helmer Ringgren, "הוא *hû'*; אני *'anî;* אנכי *'ānōkhî*," *TDOT*, vol. 3: 341-52 (esp. 346-48); Meindert Dijkstra, *Gods Voorstelling: Predikatieve expressie van zelfopenbaring in oudoosterse teksten en Deutero-Jesaja*, Dissertationes Neerlandicae: Series Theologica 2 (Kampen: Kok, 1980), 17-35, 85-221; and Harner, *Grace and Law*, 3-10, 145-47.

[41] Elliger, "Ich bin der Herr—euer Gott"; Zimmerli, "Ich bin Jahwe" (both previously cited). The arguments of Elliger that the short form and the longer form have distinctly different theological import should be rejected.

two Decalogue passages have אנכי. But the self-presentation[42] formula can also find a place in prophetic oracles, as an assurance that Yahweh will fulfill all his promises (see Exod 6). In examining the book of Ezekiel, one finds that there is scarcely any use of the self-presentation formula independent of the recognition formulae, or the refrain which echoes them by using a different verb of perception (ראה in 20:48, MT 21:4), or the conclusion formula for divine speech (*Schlußformel eines Gottesspruchs*), אני יהוה דברתי (21:32, MT 21:37). The only use of אני יהוה, independent of the recognition formulae and conclusion formulae, is found in Ezekiel 20 (vv. 5, 7, 19), where God recounts the redemption out of Egypt and the giving of the law (avoidance of idols).[43] This phrase, though it also serves as a component part of the recognition formula, should be interpreted as a separate formula with a distinct use and function and theological import of its own.

The self-presentation formula, אני יהוה, is obviously a verbless (or nominal) clause. Scholars who specialize in Hebrew grammar have devoted much research to the verbless clause in its different manifestations, especially since the publication of Francis Andersen's painstaking work in 1970 and the Hoftijzer review of the same.[44] Today, it seems there is broad agreement that after a verb of perception such as ידע, a verbless כי object clause

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[42] This study chooses to use the terminology "self-presentation" rather than "self-introduction," though there is good reason to understand אני יהוה in some contexts as a "divine self-assertion" instead of "self-presentation." The idea of "self-introduction" does not seem to be present in Ezekiel's use of אני יהוה in the few places it appears on its own. As K. Günther writes, "Jahwe tritt nicht als Unbekannter auf, sondern verweist im Zusammenhang mit der Kundgabe seines Namens auf schon Bekanntes und früher Geschehens (Gen 15,7; 26,24; 28,13; 31,13; Ex 3,6; auch: Hos 12,10; 13,4). Die angeschlossene Verheißungsrede stellt das zukünftige Handeln Gottes in desen geschichlichen Zusammenhang" ("אנכי *ʾᵃnī* ich," *THAT*, vol. 1: 220).

[43] The phrase commonly appears throughout Leviticus in the context of remembering the Exodus event and identifying Yahweh as the God of the Exodus; see Lev. 11:45; 19:36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38, 55; 26:13, 45; cf. Num. 15:41.

[44] Francis I. Andersen, *The Hebrew Verbless Clause in the Pentateuch*, Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series XIV (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970); J. Hoftijzer, "Review: The Nominal Clause Reconsidered," *VT* 23 (1973): 446-510. For more current discussion, see Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (previously cited), §8.4; and Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Vol. II, Part Three: Syntax, trans. and rev. T. Muraoka, Subsidia Biblica 14/II (Rome: Editriche Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1996), §154 (for clauses such as אני יהוה, see especially 154j). Especially up-to-date and technical from the linguistic angle is Cynthia L. Miller, ed., *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches*, Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 1 (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999).

"should express simultaneity."[45] In chapter two we noted a chief problem one faces in translating the self-presentation formula within the verbally expanded recognition formulae. Should יהוה אני be translated appositionally[46] ("you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken") or not ("you shall know that I am Yahweh, I have spoken")?

The recognition formula does not appear everywhere Ezekiel's prophecy presents an oracle describing Yahweh's action to judge or to bless. That is to say, Ezekiel may prophesy divine intervention without employing the refrain. However, where the refrain does appear (outside the retrospective of chapter twenty), it only occurs in oracles proclaiming divine action. Scholars struggle to understand the function of the refrains in their literary context, and some urge that further research be undertaken. Vervenne writes,

> It is clearly of primary importance that we examine the way in which the pKY [phraseology of "knowing YHWH"] is syntactically related to its context. As a matter of fact, its syntactic relationship with what precedes is determinative of the function of the pKY. The pKY is normally seen as a motif of purpose: deeds of YHWH in history intended to let him be known/recognised.[47]

The content of the verb ידע, therefore, is not "Yahweh has done thus and such," but "I am Yahweh."[48] Through the proclamation of the name in association with the prophesied divine intervention, Yahweh personally is recognized.

Vervenne also notes some scholars who take a different view and deny that the refrain is a purposive construction. Fohrer among them says that the recognition formula "is intended to summon the listener to judge that it is Yahweh who has intervened or is about to intervene, with his wrath or with his aid."[49] There is not necessarily, then, a *Vorstellung* or

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[45] Lénart J. de Regt, "Macrosyntactic Functions of Nominal Clauses Referring to Participants," in *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew* (previously cited), 288.

[46] In the most recent linguistic studies, the older traditional term, "apposition," is replaced by the newer term, "rear-dislocation," or, in the study of right-to-left Hebrew, "left-dislocation." See Alviero Niccacci, "Types and Functions of the Nominal Sentence," in *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, 245ff.

[47] Marc Vervenne, "The Phraseology of "Knowing YHWH" (cited previously), 481. He notes the important scholars who take the position that the formula indicates purpose: Zimmerli, "The Knowledge of God"; Antoon Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour: A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres in Is. XL-LV*, VTSup 24 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 119 [*sic*, Vervenne's reference should be to p. 113ff.], cf. 88-90; and J. P. Floss, *Jahwe Dienen* (previously cited), 299.

[48] So says Schoors, 113.

[49] Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (previously cited), 409-10. Vervenne cites others challenging Zimmerli's position at this point: Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen*, 40-46; and

self-presentation, nor is the one who says "I am Yahweh" proving himself (the *Erweiswort* idea). "It is an explanatory formula which indicates how the announced or narrated intervention of YHWH should be correctly understood, namely as an action *of* YHWH."[50] On these disputed points this study finds, first of all, that the recognition formula does indicate the purpose or goal of the prophesied action—the idea that it is merely an explanatory formula seems weak and inadequate—and, secondly, that Yahweh is manifesting and proving himself (or proving the truth of his word, which has been ignored). There is an aspect of *Erweiswort*, though the *Gattung* structure Zimmerli sought to outline frequently breaks down.[51] Chapters six and seven of this study will discuss the literary function and theological meaning of the keynote formula.

In Vervenne's valuable syntactical analysis, he indicates that the pKY can have an "explicit purposive construction."[52] He mentions first of all the למען "particle of purpose" found repeatedly in Exodus, Isaiah, and Ezekiel (twice).[53] Secondly, the ל-*qetol* infinitive form which one reads in "knowing Yahweh" texts such as Exodus 31:13; Deuteronomy 4:35; 1 Kings 8:43; Jeremiah 24:7; and Ezekiel 20:12, 20 can properly be "considered a purposive construction since it is apparent from the syntax that it is connected as such to a preceding clause."[54] It must be admitted, however, that grammarians face real difficulty in distinguishing between purpose and result, since "the notions of purpose and result are often expressed by the same means"[55] in the Hebrew language.

Another syntactical observation is that Ezekiel not uncommonly places the recognition formula (*weqatalti* -x) in a series of *weqatalti* forms, and, Vervenne notes, the refrain is not

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Bernhard Lang, *Ezechiel: Der Prophet und das Buch*, Erträge der Forschung 153 (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981), 95-97.

[50] Vervenne, 482 [emphasis his].

[51] As noted by Hossfeld, *Untersuchungen*, 40-46.

[52] Vervenne, 483.

[53] See Exodus 8:10 (MT 8:6), 22 (MT 8:18); 9:29; 11:7; Isaiah 41:20; 43:10; 45:3, 6; Ezekiel 20:26; 38:16. Cf. 2 Chron. 6:33.

[54] Vervenne, 484.

[55] Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, §169.i.

always in the final position in such stringing.[56] Vervenne does not consider the *weqataltí* pKY to be a purposive form. "It can, however, indicate succession or more precisely consecution and ought to be translated as follows: 'so', 'thus', 'then'."[57] Approximately half of Ezekiel's recognition formulae should be translated to reflect consecution ("as a consequence thereof . . .").

One of the advances over previous scholarship made by Moshe Greenberg is his explanation of a "halving pattern" in Ezekiel's oracles and a sometimes associated "afterwave effect in oracle-closure."[58] As he examines passages and their features—articulation, opening and closing formulae, "distinctive homogenous linguistic and poetic textures"—he discovers their larger structures, their "design and . . . integrating elements." The "most important" structure is the "halving pattern and repetition," described as follows:

> . . . a theme, A, is propounded in the first, usually longest, part of the oracle; it is followed by a second theme, B, which is somehow related to the first theme (by skewing or development of an aspect of it); B characteristically ends, or is followed by a coda, with elements of A and B intermingled.[59]

The recognition formula may play a part in the halving pattern and serve as a signpost for the reader, indicating the conclusion of sections. The formula serves this function well in the very first halving pattern, located in Ezekiel 6, which also contains the "afterwave." There, Greenberg points out, the main oracle of verses 3-7 closes with the recognition formula, and it is followed by an afterwave in verses 8-10, which also closes with the formula. The second oracle is characteristically shorter, verses 11-13a$^{\alpha}$, and has a concluding recognition formula. Its afterwave (13a$^{\beta}$-14) is said to begin with the infinitive (בהיות) and to close with the recognition formula.[60] The use of the keynote formula within

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[56] Examples in Ezekiel which are provided by Vervenne would be: 5:13; 6:6-7, 8-9, 12-13, 14; 13:14, 23; 14:8; 16:62; 20:41-42, 43-44; 22:16; 24:27; 25:7, 14, 17; 28:22-23; 29:9; 30:19, 26; 33:29; 34:27; 36:11, 23, 35-36; 37:6, 12-13, 14; 38:23; 39:6, 21-22, 29-30. We can compare Exodus 6:6-8 (an excellent example indeed); 7:4-5; 29:46; and 1 Kings 20:28.

[57] Vervenne, 485.

[58] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, pp. 25-26.

[59] Ibid., 25.

[60] Ibid., 137.

such carefully designed structures makes it seem more integrated into the oracles—not an accretion—and also more purposeful from a rhetorical and theological standpoint.

5. "Clusters" and "Concentrations" Of The Formula

There is a "clustering" phenomenon with Ezekiel's recognition formulae. The reader of Ezekiel's prophecy discovers that several chapters may pass between appearances of the refrain. None appear in the opening vision and the immediately following sign-acts (1:1–5:4); the first temple vision (8:1–11:4); the disputation and lament in chapters 18–19; or in the final temple vision (40–48). Where the refrain does appear, the reader can sometimes find high concentrations. A table of "clusters" is provided below.

Table 2. — Greatest Concentrations of Recognition Formulae in Ezekiel

6:1-14	Oracle against "the mountains of Israel"	4 x
12:8-20	Oracle explaining the sign-act in chapter 12	3 x
13:1-23	Oracle against the false prophets	4 x
20:1-44	Historical retrospective and oracle	6 x
28:20-26	Oracle of judgment against Sidon	4 x
29:2-16	Oracle against Pharaoh and against all Egypt	3 x
35:1-15	Oracle against Mount Seir/Edom	4 x
36:8-38	Oracle of blessing upon trampled Israel	4 x
37:1-14	Vision of the valley of dry bones, resurrection	3 x

The greatest concentration of recognition formulae in a single cluster would be the prophecy against Sidon in 28:20-26. Within that one oracle, only 119 words in the Hebrew, the refrain appears four times. Those four, however, are split between a judgment oracle addressed to Sidon (vv. 20-24) and an associated prophecy of Yahweh's blessing upon Israel (vv. 25-26), probably still addressed to Sidon.[61] Also to be noted are what might be

[61] Zimmerli says that vv. 25-26 "are not to be considered as an independent oracle" (*Ezekiel* 2, 100). However, he also thinks the oracle comes from a later hand.

termed "doublet arrangements," where a second recognition formula closely follows upon another at the conclusion of a divine speech.[62]

6. TEXT-CRITICAL AND REDACTION-CRITICAL ISSUES

As was previously noted in this dissertation, the Septuagintal text of Ezekiel is considerably shorter than the Masoretic text. Certain scholars, Jahn[63] and Eichrodt among them, have expressed great confidence in the value of the LXX for textual criticism of Ezekiel. Our concern here is only with the recognition formula. Might one not expect that the shorter LXX would contain fewer occurrences of the refrain? As it turns out, a careful reading of the Göttingen edition[64] shows that the Septuagint includes all the recognition formulae found in the Hebrew with but one exception. The refrain in 20:26 is missing in the LXX. An additional discrepancy between the two traditions is the displacement of oracles in chapter 7 which affects the refrains we are studying. The recognition formula in 7:4 is located at 7:8 in the LXX, while the formula in 7:9 is located at 7:6 in the LXX. Thus, these two are reversed in order of appearance.

The text-critical problem of 20:26 deserves further consideration. Because the refrain and its introduction, למען אשר ידעו אשר אני יהוה, are missing in the Septuagint's rendering and in certain other ancient witnesses,[65] scholars are inclined to treat the text as secondary.[66] They believe the wisdom of their decision is confirmed by internal evidence as

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[62] These seem to be a unique characteristic of Ezekiel's prophecy. This student has not discovered them elsewhere. See 6:13-14; 11:11-12; 12:15-16 (note also v. 20); 20:42-44; 25:5-7; 28:22-26 (4x); 30:25-26; 34:27-30; 37:13-14. Ezekiel 39:22-23 might be considered a close relation of this. Ezekiel 35:12 and 15 are not in this category because they are divided by the formula כה אמר אדני יהוה.

[63] Gustav Jahn, *Das Buch Ezechiel auf Grund der Septuaginta hergestellt* (Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1905).

[64] Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Ezechiel*, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum, vol. XVI.1, second edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977).

[65] The ancient versions and witnesses are: a couple of Old Latin manuscripts (Constance, Fragmenta Sangallensia), Targum (Jonathan?), Justin Martyr, and Jerome.

[66] The team of Ezekiel scholars taking this position is impressive indeed. See Cooke, 219; John W. Wevers, *Ezekiel*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1969), 118; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 272f.; and Zimmerli, who says that the absence of the formula in ancient versions, the introduction of the keynote formula with למען אשר, and the replacement of כי with אשר in the formula all indicate its secondary character (*Ezekiel 1*, p. 401).

well; they note that no other recognition formula in Ezekiel either has the introductory phrase, למען אשר, or has אשר in the place of כי within the object clause. Finally, the imperfect verb sets this refrain apart as unique and as a likely insertion by a later hand, which did not conform to the usual pattern of use (perfect with *waw* consecutive construction). More recent commentators, in line with contemporary final-form interests, have been reluctant to excise the refrain. Leslie Allen believes the formula fits neatly into a "complex chiastic jigsaw of [vv.] 3-31" and could be integral "to an early stage of the redacted text."[67] Daniel Block in his commentary notes the text-critical issue but interprets the Hebrew text as we have it.[68] It is fair to say that the refrain at 20:26 is suspicious, but it will not be deleted from the list of formulae considered in this study.[69]

We note in passing that the research behind this dissertation tends to confirm the long-standing conclusions of earlier Septuagint scholarship (especially Thackeray)[70] that the Greek translation was not done by a single hand but falls into three recognizable sections: chapters 1–27 and 40–48 belong to a first translator, and 28–39 belong to a second. The recognition formulae within chapter 1–27 are normally rendered into Greek with verbless object clauses, i.e., without ειμι. For example, 6:7 reads, και επιγνωσεσθε οτι εγω κυριος. In chapters 28–39 one regularly finds the verb included in the object clause of the formula: e.g., και γνωσονται οτι εγω ειμι κυριος (38:23). Out of 71 total refrains, the only occurrences which do not follow this pattern are 7:9 (LXX 7:6) in the first section, and

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[67] Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, p. 4. See also, Allen, "The Structuring of Ezekiel's Revisionist History Lesson (Ezekiel 20:3-31)," *CBQ* 54.3 (1992): 448-62.

[68] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 634ff. While Greenberg takes notice of the LXX lacking a portion of 20:22, he does not mention this text-critical problem of the missing formula in verse 26 (*Ezekiel 1–20*, pp. 361, 368ff.). Greenberg treats the MT as it stands. The same is true of Darr's commentary (previously cited, p. 1284), and the most recently published major study of 20:25-26, that of Scott Walker Hahn and John Sietze Bergsma ("What Laws Were 'Not Good'? A Canonical Approach to the Theological Problem of Ezekiel 20:25-26," *JBL* 123.2 [2004]: 201-18).

[69] As more and more scholars are treating the MT and LXX as reflections of different redactional stages, each text tradition allegedly experiencing its own processes of literary growth, the importance of the LXX as a witness to the earliest Hebrew text of Ezekiel may decline.

[70] H. St. John Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of Ezekiel," *JTS* 4 (1903): 398-411; and idem, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins*, The Schweich Lectures 1920, second edition (London: H. Milford for the British Academy, 1923).

36:36, 38;[71] and 37:14 in the second section. One wonders if the variations may be the result of a final editing of the Septuagint. This student's conclusions regarding the LXX are closely similar to those of Leslie John McGregor.[72]

The dual designation of God as אדני יהוה is another text-critical issue arising from the comparison of the MT and LXX. Though very common in the MT of Ezekiel, appearing a total of 217 times,[73] the dual designation is rare in the Septuagint.[74] Because the LXX normally renders יהוה by κυριος, a redundancy (κυριος κυριος) was understandably avoided by the translators. Greenberg gives good reasons for distrusting past scholarship—see Karl Elliger's apparatus in *BHS*—which suggested the deletion of a portion of the occurrences of אדני to bring the MT more into line with the LXX.[75] There is good reason to give careful consideration to one of McGregor's plausible suggestions that the LXX translators originally rendered the dual designation with κυριος *joined to* a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name יהוה, but that later editors commonly replaced the

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[71] The argument of J. Lust is that the omission of 36:23c-38 in LXX Papyrus 967, "the earliest witness of the pre-hexaplaric Septuagint of Ezekiel," is not accidental (the result of *parablepsis*). That passage was not in the earliest forms of the LXX, he contends, nor in the Hebrew *Vorlage*. Instead, it was composed and inserted as a transition between chapters 36 and 37. See Johan Lust, "Ezekiel 36–40 in the Oldest Greek Manuscript," *CBQ* 43.4 (1981): 517-33. This may help to explain the evidence of different translation habits with regard to the recognition formulae in this passage. Lust is supported by Emanuel Tov, "Recensional Differences between the MT and LXX of Ezekiel," *ETL* 62.1 (1986): 89-101. The case for accidental omission is made by Floyd V. Filson, "The Omission of Ezek. 12:26-28 and 36:22b-38 in Codex 967," *JBL* 62 (1943): 27-32; and by John W. Wevers, *Ezekiel*, 273.

[72] *The Greek Text of Ezekiel: An Examination of Its Homogeneity*, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 18 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). An earlier dissertation researching the LXX was P. D. M. Turner, "The Septuagint Version of Chapters I–XXXIX of the Book of Ezekiel: The Language, the Translation Technique and the Bearing on the Hebrew Text" (D.Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1970, reformatted 1996).

[73] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, p. 556.

[74] It appears that the most thorough analysis of the distribution of various forms of the divine name in the LXX witnesses was done by McGregor, "Appendix B" in *The Greek Text of Ezekiel*, 223-57.

[75] Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, pp. 64-5. Zimmerli discusses the matter in the first appendix to the second volume of his commentary. While he does not necessarily delete אדני on text-critical grounds, he classes all five dual designations of God within recognition formulae (categories "C" and "L" above) as "a later degenerate form" in his redaction criticism (*Ezekiel 2*, p. 556). It is most important to note that Zimmerli became more conservative toward the MT later in life and urged readers not to follow his decision in the commentary to bracket אדני where it occurs in the "complaint to Yahweh" form, the "introductory messenger formula," and "the formula for a divine saying" (*Ezekiel 2*, p. 562). The fullest discussion of the use of "Adonai Yahweh" in Ezekiel is probably P. C. Hamilton, "Theological Implications of the Divine Title Adonai Yehovah in Ezekiel," (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990).

combined *kurios yhwh* with simple *kurios.* If such alterations did take place, then the text-critical deletion of instances of אדני in the MT would clearly be destructive.

Walther Zimmerli's redaction critical conclusions, as they touch upon the recognition formulae, deserve mention because of the great influence of his essays and commentary. He rejected the older literary-critical view (Smend, etc.) that Ezekiel was "a scribe who composed the whole book,"[76] proposing instead that the prophecy experienced editorial activity of long duration. "Aus der Hand der 'Schule' Ezechiels stammt dann ohne Zweifel das heute vorliegende Ezechielbuch."[77] This "Ezekiel school" added to the original oracles, and there was also the "updating of tradition"[78] (*Fortschreibung*) at numerous points. Zimmerli wondered if chapters 1–39 and chapters 40–48 were originally separate complexes,[79] and he regarded a number of sections of the prophecy as redactional (but not to be dismissed in careful exegesis). The listing of recognition formulae in passages Zimmerli termed redactional "insertions" (*Einschübe*) must be somewhat tentative, since Zimmerli himself expressed different levels of certainty in his redaction-critical evaluations. Also, he believed the prophet may have played a leading role in the editing work.[80] The earliest edition of the book, he seems to believe, included 1:1–3:16a; 3:22–17:24; 19:1–24:27; and 33:21–39:29. The following formulae are doubted to be original, at least in the sense of belonging to the first book, before the "school" (with Ezekiel?) began its editing

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[76] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 75 (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 113*).

[77] *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 109*.

[78] *Ezekiel 1*, p. 73.

[79] He mentions in passing (*Ezekiel 1*, 73) the comment of Josephus, that Ezekiel had left two books to posterity (*Antiquities*, X.5.1.).

[80] This would be a major difference between Zimmerli and the more recent redaction critics, many of whom trained at Marburg, who mark a hard author-editor distinction. Zimmerli cautions, "In individual cases *it is often not possible to define the borders at which the prophet's own work passes over into that of the school.* The possibility that a great part of the transmission in the 'school' and the 'updating of tradition' of many oracles took place in Ezekiel's house by the prophet himself is not to be dismissed out of hand. That the prophet himself knew something of school instruction, which is phenomenologically very different from the older prophetic preaching in public, is made very clear by passages such as chapter 18; 33:1-9, 10-20. Thus besides the oral proclamation of rhythmically composed sayings, which continued the manner of preaching of the earlier prophets, *we must reckon that the prophet himself undertook the secondary work of learned commentary upon and further elaboration of his prophecies*, i.e., with a kind of 'school activity.'" (*Ezekiel 1*, 71, emphasis added.)

work: 6:13-14;[81] 11:10, 12;[82] 22:16;[83] 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15.[84] One formula (20:26) is rejected outright as not belonging to the book of Ezekiel until centuries later; Zimmerli believes it was absent from the Hebrew text used by the LXX translators. The unique form in 38:16, where the object clause containing the *Selbstvorstellungsformel* is replaced by the accusative with the first person pronoun, למען דעת הגוים אתי, "belongs to a later addition."[85]

The foregoing discussion of Zimmerli's redaction criticism may possibly leave a wrong impression. A final word may reassure the reader who inquires about statistics of the recognition formulae appearing in the final form, the MT. When Walther Zimmerli records the statistics of the refrain's appearances in Ezekiel, he does *not* base his data or conclusions upon a reconstructed text. For example, even where he is most certain of his text-critical and redaction-critical research—rejecting 20:26—Zimmerli still includes the doubtful formula in his total count of seventy-two refrains.

7. Conclusion

This chapter of the dissertation with its catalog of the recognition formula in all its variations will prove useful later on in the study, when Ezekiel's formulae will be compared with those from other Bible books. In inner-biblical interpretation, it may be supposed that Ezekiel's use of the formula will likely be most similar to that portion of Scripture from which it is derived. Patterns of use in Ezekiel will likely mirror patterns found elsewhere. For intertextual and intra-textual studies, the data will help to focus the reader's attention upon similarities of language where echoes are heard. To aid the reader in the comparison,

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[81] *Ezekiel 1*, 39. Zimmerli believes "a certain pretentious fullness of expression is intended where a second recognition formula follows on an earlier one" and in this text, 6:13-14, it is redactional.

[82] *Ezekiel 1*, 40.

[83] *Ezekiel 1*, 40.

[84] Most of these formulae occur in the oracles against the nations, portions of which, in Zimmerli's view, existed as independent collections. According to his reconstruction, "The narrative of 33:21f must once have followed directly on 24:15 in an earlier redaction phase"(*Ezekiel 1*, 71).

[85] *Ezekiel 1*, 39.

Table 4. — Distribution of Recognition Formulae in Ezekiel

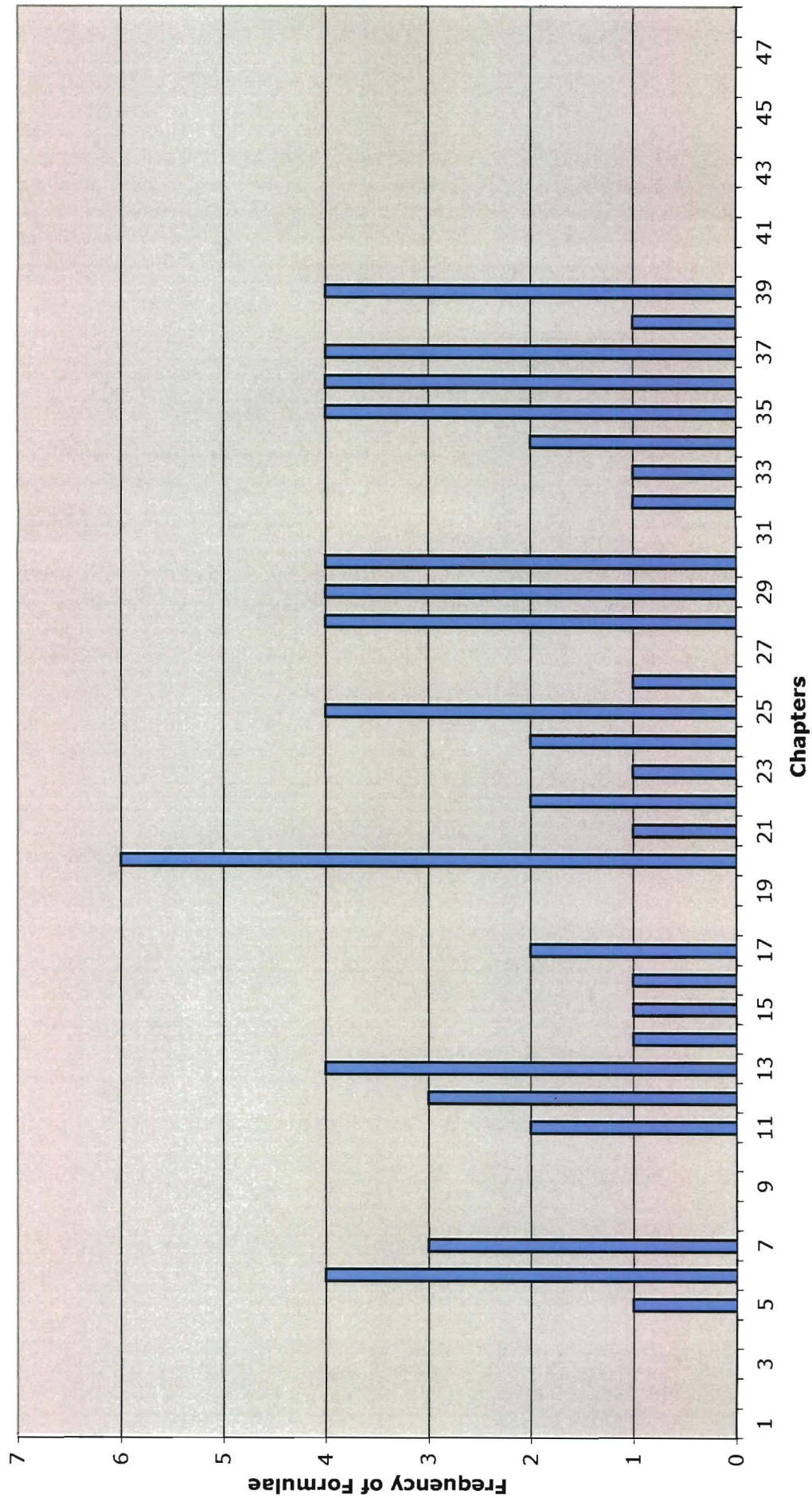

Table 5. — Distribution of Ezekiel's Recognition Formulae According to Zimmerli's Delineation of Individual Oracles

UNIT	TEXT	FORMULAE
1.	1:1 – 3:15	— cf. 2:5
2.	3:16b; 3:22 – 5:17	1x: 5:13
3.	6:1-14	4x: 6:7, 10, 13, 14
4.	7:1-27	3x: 7:4, 9, 27
5.	8:1 – 10:22; 11:22-25	—
6.	11:1-13	2x: 11:10, 12
7.	11:14-21	—
8.	12:1-16	2x: 12:15, 16
9.	12:17-20	1x: 12:20
10.	12:21-25	—
11.	12:26-28	—
12.	13:1-23	4x: 13:9, 14, 21, 23
13.	14:1-11	1x: 14:8
14.	14:12-23	— cf. 14:23
15.	15:1-8	1x: 15:8
16.	16:1-63	1x: 16:62
17.	17:1-24	2x: 17:21, 24
18.	18:1-32	—
19.	19:1-14	—
20.	20:1-44	6x: 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44
21.	20:45 – 21:7 (MT 21:1-12)	1x: 21:5 [21:10]; cf. 20:48 [21:4]
22.	21:8-17 (MT 21:13-22)	—
23.	21:18-32 (MT 21:23-37)	—
24.	22:1-16	1x: 22:16
25.	22:17-22	1x: 22:22
26.	22:23-31	—
27.	23:1-49	1x: 23:49
28.	24:1-14	—
29.	24:15-27	2x: 24:24, 27
30.	25:1-17	4x: 25:5, 7, 11, 17; cf. 25:14
31.	26:1-21	1x: 26:6
32.	27:1-36	—
33.	28:1-10	—
34.	28:11-19	—
35.	28:20-26	4x: 28:22, 23, 24, 26
36.	29:1-16	3x: 29:6, 9, 16
37.	29:17-21	1x: 29:21
38.	30:1-19	2x: 30:8, 19
39.	30:20-26	2x: 30:25, 26
40.	31:1-18	—
41.	32:1-16	1x: 32:15
42.	32:17-32	—
43.	33:1-20	—
44.	33:21-22	—
45.	33:23-33	1x: 33:29; cf. 33:33
46.	34:1-31	2x: 34:27, 30
47.	35:1 – 36:15	5x: 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:11
48.	36:16-38	3x: 36:23, 36, 38
49.	37:1-14	3x: 37:6, 13, 14
50.	37:15-28	1x: 37:28
51.	38:1 – 39:29	5x: 38:23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28; cf. 38:16; 39:23
52.	40:1 – 48:35	—

APPENDIX: LIST OF RECOGNITION FORMULAE AND RELATED PHRASES OUTSIDE EZEKIEL

A. Exodus

1. The "Strict" Recognition Formula and Expansions

וידעתם כי אני יהוה אלהיכם

And you shall know that I am Yahweh your God

Exodus 6:7; 16:12

וידעו מצרים כי־אני יהוה

And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh

Exodus 7:5; 14:4, 18

בזאת תדע כי אני יהוה

By this you (singular) shall know that I am Yahweh

Exodus 7:17 (Qal imperfect)

למען תדע כי אני יהוה בקרב הארץ

So you (singular) shall know that I, Yahweh, am in this land

Exodus 8:22 (MT 8:18) (Qal imperfect)

וידעתם כי־אני יהוה

And you shall know that I am Yahweh

Exodus 10:2

וידעו כי אני יהוה אלהיהם

And they shall know that I am Yahweh their God

Exodus 29:46

לדעת כי אני יהוה מקדשכם

So you may know that I am Yahweh, who makes you holy

Exodus 31:13 (with infinitive construct)

2. Phrases Related To The Recognition Formula

למען תדע כי־אין כיהוה אלהינו

So you may know that there is no one like Yahweh our God

Exodus 8:10 (MT 8:6)

בעבור תדע כי אין כמני בכל־הארץ

So you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth/land

Exodus 9:14

למען תדע כי ליהוה הארץ

So you may know that the earth/land belongs to Yahweh

Exodus 9:29

למען תדעון אשר יפלה יהוה בין מצרים ובין ישראל

So you may know that Yahweh distinguishes between the Egyptians and Israel

Exodus 11:7

וידעתם כי יהוה הוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים

And you shall know that Yahweh brought you out of the land of the Egyptians

Exodus 16:6

B. Numbers

PHRASE RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

ואמר משה בזאת תדעון כי־יהוה שלחני לעשות את כל־המעשים האלה . . .

And Moses said, By this you shall know that Yahweh has sent me to do all these works. . .

Numbers 16:28

C. Deuteronomy

1. THE EXPANDED RECOGNITION FORMULA

למען תדעו כי אני יהוה אלהיכם

So you would know that I am Yahweh your God

Deuteronomy 29:6 (MT 29:5)

2. PHRASES RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

אתה הראת לדעת כי יהוה הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו

You were shown this so you might know that Yahweh he is God; there is none besides him

Deuteronomy 4:35

וידעת היום והשבת אל־לבבך כי יהוה הוא האלהים . . .

Know then this day and keep in [your] heart that Yahweh he is God . . .

Deuteronomy 4:39

וידעת כי־יהוה אלהיך הוא האלהים

Know that Yahweh your God, he is God

Deuteronomy 7:9

D. Joshua

PHRASES RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

היום הזה אחל גדלך בעיני כל־ישראל אשר ידעון כי כאשר הייתי עם־משה אהיה עמך׃

This day I shall begin to make you great in the eyes of all Israel that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I am with you.

Joshua 3:7

בזאת תדעון כי אל חי בקרבכם

In this you shall know that the living God is among you . . .

Joshua 3:10

למען דעת כל־עמי הארץ את־יד יהוה כי חזקה היא למען יראתם את־יהוה אלהיכם כל־הימים׃

. . . So that all peoples of the earth might know the hand of Yahweh, that it is strong, and so that you might fear Yahweh your God perpetually.

Joshua 4:24

E. 1 Samuel

PHRASE RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

וידעו כל־הארץ כי יש אלהים לישראל

Then all the world shall know that there is a God of/for Israel

1 Samuel 17:46

F. 1 & 2 Kings

1. The "Strict" Recognition Formula

וידעת כי־אני יהוה

And you (singular) shall know that I am Yahweh
1 Kings 20:13

וידעתם כי־אני יהוה

And you (plural) shall know that I am Yahweh
1 Kings 20:28

2. Phrases Related To The Recognition Formula

למען ידעון כל־אמי הארץ את־שמך ליראה אתך

So that all peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you
1 Kings 8:43

למען דעת כל־אמי הארץ כי יהוה הוא האלהים אין עוד

So that all peoples of the earth may know that Yahweh he is God; there is no other
1 Kings 8:60

וידעו העם הזה כי־אתה יהוה האלהים

So this people may know that you, Yahweh, are God . . .
1 Kings 18:37

וידעו כל־ממלכות הארץ כי אתה יהוה אלהים לבדך

So all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Yahweh, are God
2 Kings 19:19

G. Isaiah

1. The "Strict" Recognition Formula and Expansions

למען תדע כי־אני יהוה הקורא בשמך אלהי ישראל

So you shall know that I am Yahweh, who calls you by name, the God of Israel
Isaiah 45:3

וידעת כי־אני יהוה אשר לא־יבשו קוי

And you shall know that I am Yahweh, those who wait for me shall not be put to shame

Isaiah 49:23

וידעו כל־בשר כי אני יהוה מושיעך וגאלך אביר יעקב

And all flesh shall know that I am Yahweh, your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob

Isaiah 49:26

וידעת כי אני יהוה מושיעך וגאלך אביר יעקב

And you shall know that I am Yahweh, your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob

Isaiah 60:16

2. Phrases Related To The Recognition Formula

ונודע יהוה למצרים וידעו מצרים את־יהוה ביום ההוא

And Yahweh will make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day.

Isaiah 19:21

וידעו כל־ממלכות הארץ כי־אתה יהוה לבדך

So all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are Yahweh[86]

Isaiah 37:20

למען יראו וידעו וישימו וישכילו יחדו כי יד־יהוה עשתה זאת

So they may see and know, may put [it before them] and consider together, that the hand of Yahweh has done this . . .

Isaiah 41:20

ונדעה כי אלהים אתם

So we may know that you are gods.

Isaiah 41:23

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[86] There is a problem of textual criticism here. We find the addition of אלהים in 1QIs[a], after the divine name in verse 20. Some scholars believe the DSS reading should be followed here (R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, NCBC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 285; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002], 411), but others retain the difficult MT reading without אלהים, which is bolstered by the Vulgate and Targum (Willem A. M. Beuken, *Isaiah II/2, Isaiah Chapters 28–39*, HCOT [Leuven: Peeters, 2000], 334).

למען תדעו ותאמינו לי ותבינו כי־אני הוא

So you may know and believe me, may understand that I am he.

Isaiah 43:10

למען ידעו ממזרח־שמש וממערבה כי־אפס בלעדי אני יהוה ואין עוד

So they may know, from the rising of the sun and [to] its setting, that there is none apart from me. I am Yahweh and there is no other.

Isaiah 45:6

לכן ידע עמי שמי לכן ביום ההוא כי־אני־הוא המדבר הנני

Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day [they will know] that I am he, who speaks; behold me.

Isaiah 52:6

H. Jeremiah

PHRASES RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

כי אם־בזאת יתהלל המתהלל השכל וידע אותי כי אני יהוה . . .

Rather let the one who boasts boast of this: that he understands and knows me, that I am Yahweh . . .

Jeremiah 9:24 (MT 9:23)

וידעו כי־שמי יהוה

And they shall know that my name is Yahweh

Jeremiah 16:21

ונתתי להם לב לדעת אתי כי אני יהוה והיו־לי לעם ואנכי אהיה להם לאלהים

And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Yahweh, and they will be my people and I will be their God . . .

Jeremiah 24:7

למען תדעו כי קום יקומו דברי עליכם לרעה

So that you will know that my words of calamity against you will surely stand

Jeremiah 44:29

I. Hosea

PHRASES RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

והיא לא ידעה כי אנכי נתתי לה הדגן . . .

And she did not know that I gave her the grain . . .

Hosea 2:8 (MT 2:10); cf. 2:20 (MT 2:22)

וידעת את־יהוה

And you shall know Yahweh

Hosea 2:20 (MT 2:22)

ואנכי יהוה אלהיך מארץ מצרים ואלהים זולתי לא תדע

I am Yahweh your God [since you came] from the land of Egypt, you [shall?] know no God but me.

Hosea 13:4

J. Joel

THE EXPANDED RECOGNITION FORMULA

וידעתם כי בקרב ישׂראל אני ואני יהוה אלהיכם ואין עוד

And you shall know that I am in Israel, and that I am Yahweh your God, and there is no other.

Joel 2:27

וידעתם כי אני יהוה אלהיכם שׁכן בציון הר־קדשׁי

And you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain

Joel 3:17 (MT 4:17)

K. Zechariah

PHRASES RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

וידעתם כי־יהוה צבאות שׁלחני

And you shall know that Yahweh Sebaoth sent me

Zechariah 2:9 (MT 2:13)

וידעת כי־יהוה צבאות שׁלחני אליך

And you shall know that Yahweh Sebaoth sent me to you

Zechariah 2:11 (MT 2:15)

וידעת כי־יהוה צבאות שלחני אליכם

And you shall know that Yahweh Sebaoth sent me to you

Zechariah 4:9

וידעתם כי־יהוה צבאות שלחני אליכם

And you shall know that Yahweh Sebaoth sent me to you

Zechariah 6:15

L. Psalms

PHRASES RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

הרפו ודעו כי־אנכי אלהים

Be still and know that I am God

Psalm 46:10 (MT 46:11)

דעו כי־יהוה הוא אלהים

Know that Yahweh, he is God

Psalm 100:3; cf. 46:10 (MT 46:11)

M. 2 Chronicles

PHRASE RELATED TO THE RECOGNITION FORMULA

וידע מנשה כי יהוה הוא האלהים

And Manasseh knew that Yahweh, he is God

2 Chronicles 33:13

CHAPTER 4
THE ORIGIN OF THE FORMULA AND QUESTIONS OF INNER-BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

In his influential *Old Testament Theology*, Gerhard von Rad remarks upon the close correspondence between Jeremiah 31–32 and Ezekiel 36 when they speak of God's saving activity as including the granting of a "new heart" to his people, a heart upon which Yahweh's law is written that they might be enabled to obey. Von Rad comments, "There are striking parallels with Jer. XXXI. 31ff.; *one feels that Ezekiel must somehow have had Jeremiah's prophecies in front of him* (in particular, Jer. XXXII. 37ff.)."[1] Von Rad's instinct here is more than likely the correct one.[2] Von Rad draws the conclusion that "there is nothing surprising in the fact that Ezekiel was *au fait* with all that went on in the homeland, even in detail, for this is how exiles have behaved down through the ages."[3]

If the great Heidelberg professor may make such an assertion concerning literary dependence based on a few close parallels between the two prophecies, then the *many* parallels adduced and the examples of inner-biblical exegesis in this chapter justify the assertion of Ezekiel's literary dependence upon the book of Exodus. This chapter will present evidence and argue that Ezekiel drew from Exodus as a fixed and authoritative text (in some recensional form). There are serious difficulties with the standard critical view that

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[1] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II:235. Emphasis added.

[2] There is no serious difficulty in believing that a copy of some of Jeremiah's later prophecies had made its way to Babylon. At least one prophetic letter (Jer. 29) was sent to Babylon—a continuation of efforts to disseminate Jeremiah's prophecies, just as earlier oracles were already being distributed years before the exile of the young priest Ezekiel in the year 597 (see Jer. 36). Also, Ezekiel's prophecy makes mention both of traffic (24:26) and of news filtering back (11:15) from the west to the community in exile.

[3] Ibid., 221. In addition to von Rad's observation regarding the typical behavior of exiles in gathering news of goings-on in the homeland, the common priestly background of Jeremiah and Ezekiel increases the likelihood of literary borrowing. For further evidence, see William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, ed. Paul D. Hanson, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 81-84.

Ezekiel drew from a growing, rather nebulous body of tradition made up of teachings, formulae, and freely formulated history-telling, to be interpreted or reinterpreted however the community of faith chose.[4] The close, detailed correspondence between Exodus and Ezekiel at so many points does not, in the view of this student, comport well with critical theories regarding the free handling of sources and traditions. There is a contradiction between the notion of a "free handling of tradition" and the sort of strict, exact usage in Ezekiel of materials now found in the final form of the Pentateuch.

In this chapter, evidence will be presented in support of two points: (1) the claim that Ezekiel's prophecy as a whole betrays a broad dependence upon the book of Exodus, and (2) the claim that Ezekiel's use of the recognition formula was inspired by, and had its source in, Exodus. These two theses are interrelated, and the cumulative evidence adduced in support of the first serves to strengthen the second.

A. The Broad Dependence of Ezekiel upon the Book of Exodus

In his Isaiah commentary, Franz Delitzsch spoke of the Pentateuch as being somewhat prophetic in form, but standing far higher in rank than succeeding prophets. "It stands by itself as perfectly unique—the original record which regulated on all sides the being and life of Israel as the chosen nation, and to which all other prophecy stood in a derivative relation."[5] Much scholarly work remains to be done on all the prophetic books to understand the role of Scripture—the Torah, psalmody, previous prophets—in shaping the prophets' messages. To what extent has Ezekiel the prophet been "influenced by a study

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[4] Daniel Block ("In Search of Theological Meaning," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, eds. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton, 233) urges that greater attention be paid to biblical evidence that the prophets, including even the earliest writing prophets, called attention to a written law and the people's deviation from its requirements: "Hosea knew a written body of divine תורה ('instructions'; 8:12)." Block also points to texts in Deuteronomy (31:9-13; 33:10) which charge the priests with the responsibilities of teaching "your ordinances to Jacob and your torah to Israel" (33:10) and of preserving copies of the law that it might be passed on to a new generation of leadership (17:18). The priests, then, served as what Block calls "custodians of a written torah." He also mentions Ezek. 22:26 and its reference to the priests doing violence to "my law." One ponders how Ezekiel may have understood his ministry, in priestly terms, as one of upholding the integrity of the law and teaching it.

[5] Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986 reprint), 1.

of Israel's sacred writings"?[6] May we properly speak, as Brevard Childs does, of a "preoccupation with scripture on the part of Ezekiel"?[7] Yes, the broad dependence of Ezekiel upon the Pentateuch (as a literary deposit in some recension), particularly Exodus, may be seen in (1) the many linguistic and terminological parallels and the examples of inner-biblical exegesis; (2) the similarities of themes, events, and theology, which seem to direct one to read Ezekiel and Exodus together; and (3) Ezekiel's reuse of "Scriptural traditions" in a recontextualizing and sometimes sharply revisionary way.

1. Linguistic And Terminological Parallels

The most striking observation of Ezekielian dependence upon Exodus comes from close examination of the prophet's reuse of Exodus chapter 6. Ezekiel makes repeated use of what Zimmerli calls the two-sided covenant formula,[8] "you will be my people and I will be your God,"[9] which first appears in Exodus 6:7 (P)—immediately adjacent to the first recognition formula. This profound promise (decree?) of engagement appears in Ezekiel 11:20; 14:11; 34:24; 36:28; 37:23; 37:27. Ezekiel modifies the statement in 34:30-31 by merging it with the recognition formula and then quickly repeating the sense of it: "You, my sheep, . . . are people, and I am your God." With this parallel, one begins to glimpse Ezekiel's pattern of selecting a theme or formula from Exodus and multiplying its usage in his own prophecy. The prophet does more than "borrow" a formula, he appropriates it as his own and employs it with something bordering on extravagance.

Michael Fishbane has stated that Ezekiel 20:4-11, 33-36 "withstands a point-by-point comparison with the language of Exodus 6:2-9."[10] And Fishbane finds a distinct purpose in the prophet's borrowing:

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[6] Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 364.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 309.

[9] From a redemptive historical perspective, this covenant refrain is best understood as a reaffirmation of the basic covenant promise made to Abraham: "I shall establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you, as an everlasting covenant over their generations, to be God to you and to your seed after you . . . I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7-8, allegedly P).

[10] Michael Fishbane, "Torah and Tradition," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas A. Knight (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 276-77.

> Indeed, it is just by virtue of this terminological relationship to Exodus 6:2-9 that the power and paradox of Ezekiel's midrashic reinterpretation—of a "new" exodus done in wrath against Israel—are accentuated.

Several other scholars besides Fishbane, namely Blank and Haag,[11] have offered a point-by-point comparison of the two texts, Exodus 6 and Ezekiel 20. The following chart draws from the work of these three scholars and adds further parallels. Especially worth noting is the fact that Ezekiel, in his style of reinterpretation, shows a strong tendency to repeat terms and phrases several times. Where he borrows phraseology, he will use and reuse the material. This pattern also shows up, of course, in Ezekiel's multiplication of recognition formulae.

Table 6. — The First Reuse of Exodus 6 in Ezekiel 20

EXODUS 6		EZEKIEL 20
(v. 3) נודעתי	"I revealed myself"	ואודע (v. 5); נודעתי (v. 9)
(v. 8) נשׂאתי את־ידי	"I lifted my hand" (in an oath)	ואשׂא ידי (twice in v. 5) נשׂאתי ידי (v. 6) אני נשׂאתי ידי (v. 15) אני נשׂאתי את־ידי (v. 23)
(vv. 2, 6, 8) אני יהוה	"I am Yahweh"	לאמר אני יהוה אלהיכם (v. 5) אני יהוה אלהיכם (v. 7)
(v. 7) וידעתם כי אני יהוה אלהיכם "You shall know that I am Yahweh your God"		לדעת כי אני יהוה (v. 12) לדעת כי אני יהוה אלהיכם (v. 20) ידעו אשׁר אני יהוה (v. 26)
(v. 6) והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים "I will bring you out from under the yokes of the Egyptians"		להוציאם מארץ מצרים (v. 6) "Bring them out from the Land of Egypt"
(v. 9) ולא שׁמעו אל־משׁה "But they did not listen to Moses"		ולא אבו לשׁמע אלי (v. 8) "But they would not listen to me"

[11] Sheldon H. Blank, "Studies in Deutero-Isaiah," 44-45; Herbert Haag, *Was lehrt die literarische Untersuchung des Ezechiel-Textes?*, 24-27; Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 132.

These are indeed persuasive parallels, but, when the reader proceeds further in Ezekiel 20 and compares verses 33 through 42 with Exodus chapter 6, the effect is little short of breath-taking. Ezekiel uses the precise language of God's compressed speech to Moses, and chapter 20 becomes nothing less than an phrase-by-phrase exposition of Exodus 6. The reader is thus provided with two separate examples, both within a single chapter (Ezek. 20:5-26, 33-42), of Ezekiel's inner-biblical interpretation of one Torah text (Exod. 6:1-9). Recognizing one case helps the reader to recognize the other. Fishbane shows the relationship between the texts by means of a chart[12] which is reproduced below.

Table 7. — The Second Reuse of Exodus 6 in Ezekiel 20

EXODUS 6:6-8		EZEKIEL 20:33-42
והוצאתי	"I will take [you] out"	והוצאתי
בזרוע נטויה	"with an outstretched arm"	בזרוע נטויה
ובשפטים	"and with judgments" / "I will judge"	ונשפטתי
וידעתם כי אני יהוה	Recognition Formula	וידעתם כי אני יהוה
והבאתי	"and I will bring [you]" / "when I bring [you]"	בהביאי
אל־הארץ	"to the land" / "to the land of Israel"	אל־אדמת ישראל
אשר נשאתי את־ידי	"which I swore" (lit. raised my hand)	אשר נשאתי את־ידי
לתת אתה	"to give it"	לתת אתה
לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב	"to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" / "to your forefathers"	לאבותיכם

Fishbane concludes by asserting that, "because of the intentional reuse of Exodus 6:6-8, Ezekiel's oracle takes on a heightened effect. Its sarcasm and bitterness were undoubtedly

[12] Fishbane, *Text and Texture*, 132.

not lost on his first audience."[13] A case can well be made that it was not only the prophet who was familiar with these motifs and quotations; the people recognized them as well. The exiles surely recognized Ezekiel's prophecy recorded in chapter 20 as a "commentary on Ex. 6."[14] There was a common literary heritage from which Ezekiel could draw. The function of the echoing was, first, to evoke the exiles' memory of the Exodus event with the familiar (beloved?) language of that narrative, and secondly to retell the story in a most negative fashion as an "unholy history" of the nation.

There is an additional parallel between Exodus 6 and Ezekiel 20 which has been noted by Levitt Kohn. The shared terminology is of special interest in this study because of the close proximity of a recognition formula in the Ezekiel 20 text (same verse).

(Exod 6:4) אֶרֶץ מְגֻרֵיהֶם "the land of their sojourn"[15] אֶרֶץ מְגוּרֵיהֶם (Ezek 20:38)

According to Levitt Kohn's research, "this expression occurs five times in P (Gen. 17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1; Exod. 6:4) and once in Ezekiel (20:38). It is not found elsewhere in the HB."

If, as we have proposed, Ezekiel had made a special study of Exodus 6 and its wording, the reader might expect to find other terms or phrases from Exodus 6 used in the prophecy. Perhaps the theological term "possession" or "heritage" (מוֹרָשָׁה), used in Exodus 6:8 (allegedly P) to denote the promised land, would be a good first example to cite. Ezekiel is the only other book to use the term in this sense,[16] and it uses it repeatedly (11:15; 25:4, 10; 33:24: 36:2-5), in a manner which fits its literary style. Another term found in Exodus 6 which is widely used in Ezekiel is "acts of judgment" (שְׁפָטִים),[17] often with the adjective "great" or "mighty" (גָּדוֹל). It occurs in Exodus 6:6; 7:4; and 12:12 (all said to be P) and

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 113.

[15] This parallel is noted by Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 39. We mark here the varied spelling, with the Exodus text lacking a *waw* in מְגֻרֵיהֶם.

[16] Deuteronomy 33:4 employs the word to describe "the law which Moses gave us."

[17] *HALOT* gives an alternate definition of "penalty."

then ten times in Ezekiel (5:10, 15; 11:9; 14:21; 16:41; 25:11; 28:22, 26; 30:14, 19). Other appearances are Num. 33:4 (P); Prov. 19:29; and 2 Chron. 24:24. As we assess these last three, we note that the Numbers text reveals how the term שְׁפָטִים is to be especially associated with the Exodus narrative. The Proverbs text is unrelated theologically to Ezekiel's usage, and the Chronicles text, judged to be much later because of the linguistic profile of the book of Chronicles as Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH), could not have exerted any influence upon Ezekiel's use of the term. If the prophecy is indeed recalling the language of the Exodus story at this point and re-employing it, the book would be signalling one of its key theological emphases: Yahweh, a God of great and terrible "judgments" in Egypt, intends to effect similar judgments again.

A clear pattern emerges as one compares Exodus texts with Ezekiel: the latter book seems to take up many terms found in the former and re-employ them in the prophecies in an elaborate and repetitious manner. Still another expression from Exodus 6, "therefore say" (לָכֵן אֱמֹר), is re-employed in Ezekiel following this same remarkable pattern. "Therefore say" introduces a divine oracle to be delivered to God's people by Moses (Exod. 6:6; Num. 25:12—both are P) or by the Prophet Ezekiel (11:16, 17; 12:23, 28; 14:6; 20:30; 33:25; 36:22). It occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament.[18]

Seven more examples of linguistic and terminological parallels will complete this brief listing. Undoubtedly, there are many more which could be adduced, but these examples must suffice. Any Bible student comparing Exodus 31:13 with Ezekiel 20:12 and 20 in English translation will immediately note the similarity between the passages.[19] The similarities between the Hebrew texts are perhaps even more noticeable, and a few of these—not all—will be discussed below.[20]

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[18] This observation and the statistics come from Levitt Kohn, 75.

[19] *(Exodus 31:13)* "You shall keep My Sabbaths. This will be a sign between Me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am Yahweh, who makes you holy." *(Ezekiel 20:12, 20)* "I also gave them My Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I, Yahweh, made them holy. . . . Keep My Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God."

[20] See B.2 later in this chapter. Levitt Kohn also discusses these parallel texts. See *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 33.

(Exodus 31:13)
אך את־שבתתי תשמרו כי אות הוא ביני וביניכם לדרתיכם לדעת
כי אני יהוה מקדשכם׃

(Ezekiel 20:12, 20)
וגם את־שבתותי נתתי להם להיות לאות ביני וביניהם לדעת
כי אני יהוה מקדשם׃

ואת־שבתותי קדשו והיו לאות ביני וביניכם לדעת כי אני יהוה אלהיכם׃

So remarkable is the similarity between the Exodus and Ezekiel texts that Eichrodt dismisses the Ezekiel verses as redactional. We are told that they were introduced by a later "priestly redactor of the prophetic text who slavishly copied the phraseology of Exodus 31."[21] In a Princeton Seminary dissertation, Joon Surh Park argues for the opposite solution, that Exodus 31 is later than and dependent upon Ezekiel 20.[22] Though Park is correct in assuming a relationship of literary dependence (and is cited mainly for that reason), it is something of an oddity for him to assert the priority of Ezekiel.[23] Such an argument is out of the mainstream of Ezekiel scholarship after Zimmerli,[24] and it is undercut both by numerous recent studies (see chapter one) which argue that Ezekiel's language is closer than "P" to Late Biblical Hebrew, and by the overwhelming evidence that Ezekiel shows a pattern of borrowing and often radical revision of earlier traditions/texts. For his part, Zimmerli attempts to resist the idea that there must be literary dependence running in one direction or the other. He writes,

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[21] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 264. See also his contribution, "Der Sabbat bei Hezekiel," in *Lex tua Veritas, Festschrift für H. Junker*, ed. H. Gross, *et al.*, 65-74 (Trier: Paulinus, 1961).

[22] Joon Surh Park, "Theological Traditions of Israel in the Prophetic Judgment of Ezekiel," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1978) 78-80.

[23] There is now a strong trend in some circles to date most all the Old Testament literature to the post-exilic era. To such scholars, Park's conclusions are more acceptable.

[24] Prior to Zimmerli's time, Cooke writes of Ezek. 20:12, "the present verse is merely a quotation from Ex. 31:13 P from H; the same may be said of v. 20." Probably on account of his late dating of P, Cooke regards the Sabbath texts in Ezekiel as secondary, "the handiwork of a later scribe, zealous for the Law" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, 217). Greenberg calls the Ezekiel texts "a virtual citation of Exod. 31:13" (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 366). Allen says of chapter 20 that "Ezekiel now follows traditional strands of the pentateuchal narratives in his depiction of the Exodus and of lawgiving and lawbreaking in the wilderness" (*Ezekiel 20–48*, p. 10). Joseph Blenkinsopp's perspective on many elements of chapter 20 including the Sabbath references is that "Ezekiel follows priestly tradition" (*Ezekiel*, Interpretation [Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990], 88).

> The close connection of the sabbath motivation of 20:12 with Exodus 31:13 must not be explained by a literary-critical reduction of the text in various ways, but by reference to Ezekiel's origin in the priestly legal tradition with its fixed language.[25]

It seems quite doubtful, however, that the number and range of parallels between the final form of Exodus and Ezekiel can be adequately explained by reference to "tradition." There must be a "hard text" behind all of Ezekiel's parallels and allusions, parallels to materials we possess today in the final form of the book of Exodus.

The preceding arguments and data in this section, showing how Ezekiel 20 used the book of Exodus, indicate that the prophet is almost certainly copying the earlier phraseology. Eichrodt's instinct was correct, though he need not have dated the materials as he did, nor denied the authenticity of the Sabbath reference (along with all other Sabbath references in Ezekiel).

Moses and Ezekiel have parallel experiences in the latter parts of the books of Exodus and Ezekiel, experiences in which they meet with Yahweh on top of mountains, receive visions and detailed building plans for the future dwelling place of God: the Tabernacle in Moses' case (Exod. 25ff. [P]), and the eschatological Temple in Ezekiel's vision (especially Ezek. 40–44). Set in these similar contexts, there are texts which relate how both priest-prophets observed the descent of the glory of Yahweh upon his dwelling-place. The Hebrew texts of Exodus 40:35 and Ezekiel 43:5 strongly suggest that the prophet's description has been influenced by the book of Exodus. Setting them alongside each other allows the reader to appreciate more fully the relationship.

(Exodus 40:34 and 35)	(Ezekiel 43:5)
וכבוד יהוה מלא את־המשכן	והנה מלא כבוד־יהוה הבית
"And the glory of Yahweh filled the Tabernacle"	"See, the glory of Yahweh filled the Temple"

The contention that Ezekiel was aware of, and influenced by, the Exodus account of Moses receiving detailed building plans for Yahweh's sanctuary is greatly strengthened by the observation that the term "span" or "hand's-breadth" (טפח) occurs twice in the alleged

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[25] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 410. The same sort of conclusion is drawn by Reventlow in comparing the Holiness Code with Ezekiel's prophecy. Cf. *Wächter über Israel: Ezechiel und seine Tradition*, BZAW 82 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1962), which views similarities as resulting from shared priestly tradition.

Priestly Source of Exodus (25:25; 37:12) and three times in Ezekiel's measurements (40:5, 43; 43:13), without appearing anywhere else in the Old Testament.[26]

The third parallel between Exodus and Ezekiel is almost exact in its vocabulary. In the first extended passage in Ezekiel to include the recognition formula, chapter 6, the reader finds the expression דברתי לעשות להם הרעה (v. 10). Exodus 32, which records the Golden Calf incident, also speaks of disaster which Yahweh threatened to bring upon the people: הרעה אשר דבר לעשות לעמו (v. 14). According to Greenberg, this expression occurs only in these two passages throughout the whole Old Testament.[27]

A fourth example of shared terminology is the phrase, נטה את־ידי, "stretch out my hand/forearm," which, Levitt Kohn notes, appears four times in Exodus (all P) and five times in Ezekiel's prophecy.[28] (Additionally it is found in Jer. 6:12.) Out of the four occurrences in Exodus, the single text which has Yahweh as the subject of נטה (7:5) also contains a recognition formula: "Then the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh when I stretch out my hand . . ." In Ezekiel, too, the verb נטה is used with Yahweh as the subject (all five times), and one text includes an attached recognition formula. Levitt Kohn points out that "in Ezek. 6:14, Yahweh's purpose echoes Exod. 7:5: '. . . so they will know that I am Yahweh.'"[29] There is an ironic twist in the language, however, as Ezekiel reuses a phrase which once referred to Yahweh's activity in saving his people at the time of the Exodus; the God of Israel now stretches out his hand *against* Israel to make himself known.

We examine a fifth example. Both men received peculiar visions of God in his glory when they were commissioned, and the spectacle of the כבוד יהוה is a leading motif in both Exodus and Ezekiel. The glory visions included the aspects of storm-clouds (ענן) and fire/lightning (אש) (Exod. 19:16 [E]; 24:15-18 [P]; Ezek. 1:4); a clear pavement or "fixed platform"[30] under the feet of God (Exod. 24:10 [J]; Ezek. 1:22, 26); objects beneath the

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[26] Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 54.

[27] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 135.

[28] Those texts are: Exod. 7:5, 19; 14:16, 26; and Ezek. 6:14; 14:9, 13; 25:13; 35:3.

[29] Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 33.

[30] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 130. The terminology in referring to the platform differs, perhaps because of perspective—Exodus speaks of it as a pavement (כמעשה לבנת) under the feet of Yahweh, while Ezekiel

deity which appeared like "sapphire" (ספיר), probably the stone which is today called lapis lazuli (Exod. 24:10 [J]; Ezek. 1:26; 10:1).[31] Nowhere else in the Old Testament is there a text which associates ספיר with God's locale.

In yet another parallel, Ezekiel chapter 8, the prophet receives a vision of gross idolatry being practiced on the Temple grounds by "seventy elders of the house of Israel" (8:7-13). This should be tied to the Exodus account of the "seventy elders of Israel" along with Moses approaching Yahweh at Sinai (Exod. 24:9-11 [J]). There is in the whole of the Old Testament only a single other passage that refers to seventy elders (Numbers 11 [J/E]). Brevard Childs will even go so far as to say that Ezekiel's vision "is not understood unless this cultic abuse is seen in the light of the covenant ceremony in Exod. 24:9ff."[32] The contrast between the idolatrous elders and the elders worshipping before Yahweh is striking. Once again, there is a shock for readers of Ezekiel's oracles who know the language of the Exodus narratives.

Any mention of "the firstborn" immediately prompts Ezekiel specialists to think of chapter twenty. Because of the notorious difficulties with the theology of the text, one hesitates even to mention Ezek. 20:26. However, the link between the phrasing of "firstborn" (כל־פטר רחם, "every first issue which opens a womb") in that text and the consecration of the "firstborn" (כל־פטר רחם again) in Exod. 13:12, 15; and 34:19 [all said to be J/E] is so compelling that it cannot be neglected. The connection between Exod. 13:12 and Ezek. 20:26 is even clearer with the adjacent Hiphil forms of עבר (an infinitive construct in Ezekiel and a perfect in Exodus). There is only one other occurrence of the

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looks at it "from below," and will speak of it as an expanse or "firmament" above the heads of the four living creatures (רקיע אשר על־ראשם). Use of the term "firmament" may tie this Ezekiel text to Genesis 1 (allegedly P), which contains six occurrences of רקיע. Other than Genesis 1 and Ezekiel's five occurrences (1:22, 23, 25, 26; 10:1), it appears in only a few scattered texts (Psa. 19:2; 150:1; Dan. 12:3).

[31] Some scholars take ספיר in Ezek. 10:1 to describe Yahweh's throne (NIV; NRSV), as in 1:26, while others understand Ezekiel to speak of a lapis lazuli platform which parallels Exodus 24:10 (NJPS; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 179-80; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 319). True "sapphire" or "corundum" seems to have been unknown in the ANE; on this point see *HALOT*, p. 764, and Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 153.

[32] Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 364. Cf. the similar comments of Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 113; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, p. 143; and Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, pp. 289-90.

phrase, כל־פטר רחם, in the entire Bible: Num. 18:15 [P], and it is without an accompanying עבר verb. Daniel Block is surely right to say of the Ezekiel text that "[t]he form of the . . . statement is influenced by the traditional rite of redemption of the firstborn," which appears in Exod. 13.[33]

The evidence mounts that the book of Exodus—its stories, themes, catch-phrases, and formulae—were recognizable to the people and *saturated* the mind of the prophet. Because Exodus was part of the literary heritage shared by Ezekiel and his contemporaries, historical references, allusions and even quotations could be used to considerable rhetorical effect, especially where familiar language was "skewed"[34] to deliver a reproach. The situation among the exiles made supreme demands upon the preacher-prophet's rhetorical skills, for the people would not listen (Ezek. 2:3-8).

The oracles of Ezekiel would seem to lose their coherence and power unless there was available to the people a common record of their historical past. Analogously, how could any public figure in twenty-first century America or South Africa make a similarly detailed, extended and emotive appeal, based on historical occurrences centuries ago, unless there were records and accounts which the people held in common and which were widely known? How else could Ezekiel repeatedly reproach the nation for its lack of historical memory—"you did not remember the days of your youth" (16:22, 43)? Without that common record to which Ezekiel might appeal, the six references to Egypt in the first twenty-seven verses of chapter 23 would scale the heights of irrelevance.

This seems to be an instance in which Occam's Razor cuts through the complexity of many scholarly arguments. When one considers (1) that Ezekiel chapter 20 reminds the people of their deliverance from Egypt—and Hosea had done the same much earlier— and (2) that the "reminder" in #1 indicates that the nation knew the story of her past (which could be scandalously retold in chapters 16 and 23); and (3) that Ezekiel 20 recalls the

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[33] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 636.

[34] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 372. He also writes, "We conclude that Ezekiel characteristically utilizes a traditional phrase with a shocking twist: in the new Exodus the ferocity that tradition asserted was unleashed upon Egypt in the old one will be turned against rebellious Israel in order to force it finally to accept what it never had before—God's kingship over it in the land he chose for it."

nation's historical experience using some of the exact language set down in the final form of the book of Exodus; and (4) that the rhetorical punch of the prophetic retelling would seem to require the audience's familiarity with, and recognition of, both the story and the wording which Ezekiel 20 uses, it stands to reason that Exodus in a literary form quite similar to what exists today was available at that time.

Walther Zimmerli disagrees with this assessment and offers a markedly different perspective on Ezekiel's prophetic historical account in chapter 20 and elsewhere. He seeks to understand those passages using von Rad's ideas regarding the "short historical credo."[35] The credo idea proves useful to Zimmerli as he explains the strict and structured way in which Ezekiel retold Israel's history.

> G. von Rad has shown that Israel, at a very early period, formulated certain credo-like summaries of its account of its original encounter with Yahweh, which could not easily be expanded by its subsequent historical experience. Ezekiel 20 can only be understood, in its traditio-historical background, when we see how the prophet takes up here the sacred core of the credo formulation which he had received and retells Israel's history on the basis of it.[36]

How had Ezekiel received this credo formulation? It was tradition conveyed in part by "priestly theology." Indeed, "the similarity of the formulations [i.e., the content of the historical recounting in Ezekiel 20] to those of Ex 6 suggests that Ezekiel was following a priestly theology in this."[37] Elsewhere, Zimmerli explains that the "saving history"—which included both events and their theological interpretation—was "memorized in the credo."[38]

Zimmerli, building on von Rad, has set the pace in Ezekiel scholarship for nearly two generations. He stressed the importance of traditio-historical research, and his influence is seen in many contemporary scholars' constant reference to tradition—traditions encapsulated and expressed in priestly theology, in prophetic formulations, in legal

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[35] Von Rad develops the historical credo idea in: "The Form-critical Problem of the Hexateuch" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 1-78; and in his *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

[36] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 405.

[37] Ibid., 407.

[38] Ibid., 412.

formulations. However, can scholarship really understand the relationship between, say, Exodus 6 and Ezekiel 20 by making reference to the "traditions" and theology of Ezekiel's priestly heritage? Were the prophet merely carrying on an academic discussion with fellow priests, Zimmerli's approach might be far more convincing. But according to the testimony of the prophecy, Ezekiel is invoking the historical memory *of the people*, not the heirs of a priestly theology and its traditions. The prophet's commission was to "go and speak to the house of Israel" (3:1; cf. 1-17), to all the exiles. He wrote for the whole community, not for a conference of scholars. And the fact that Ezekiel employs a form of parody indicates the availability to his audience of the original material which he twists into a different shape. What is not well known cannot sensibly be "parodied" before an audience.[39]

When one bears in mind the audience and/or readership of Ezekiel's oracles, the scholars' attempts to settle the issue of parallels by constant recourse to the notion of tradition alone appear artificial.[40] It is not enough to say that "as both prophet and priest, Ezekiel had access to a wide variety of *traditional* forms of speech. He made full use of the prophetic speech formulae."[41] It is not enough for senior evangelicals to cite Zimmerli's critical conclusions regarding tradition, rather than to rethink the questions raised by this fascinating formula as it appears in various books of the Old Testament.[42] To say merely that Ezekiel's characteristic formulae are "rooted in the *tradition* of the Exodus and conquest"[43] is to fight shy of the evidence of text quotation and inner-biblical interpretation

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[39] See Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 613; and also Johan Lust, "Ez., XX, 4–26 une parodie de l'histoire religieuse d'Israel," *ETL* 43.3-4 (1967): 488-527. Ezekiel's whole argument in several places (esp. chs. 16, 20, 23) falls to the ground unless the people have some agreed-upon history which the prophet can "reference." If one seeks to interpret chapter 20 by taking seriously its exilic date and context, one seems driven to this conclusion. Of course some will continue to date the final form of Pentateuchal books very late, and they could force Ezekiel to fit their scheme with complex redaction-criticism (ranging far into the post-exilic period) or with a Deutero-Ezekiel theory.

[40] E.g., Henry McKeating writes in "Ezekiel the 'Prophet like Moses'?" 108, that ". . . the Mosaic traditions which influenced the compilers of the book of Ezekiel were not necessarily those of our finished Pentateuch, but *the partially formed traditions* which were its raw material. . . . *There are practically no echoes of the Pentateuch's language* . . ." [emphasis added]. The evidence presented in this dissertation contradicts McKeating's assertion.

[41] Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 7.

[42] Leslie Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 96; David A. Hubbard, *Joel & Amos*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 80.

[43] Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*, (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990), 329. One may also add Leslie Allen who writes in *Ezekiel 20–48*, p. 9, "*From priestly tradition*

produced in this chapter. One must take account of the multiple and sustained linkages between the two texts and of Ezekiel's reuse of Exodus material in a "lexically reorganized and topically rethematized way."[44]

This student, in researching the parallels adduced in this section, can heartily agree with Childs' conviction that

> Surely one of the most important aspects of Ezekiel's message was its dependence upon the activity of interpretation within the Bible itself. Not only was Ezekiel deeply immersed in the ancient traditions of Israel, but the prophet's message shows many signs of being influenced by a study of Israel's sacred writings. The impact of a collection of authoritative writings is strong throughout the book. Obviously, the mediating of Israel's tradition through an authoritative written source represents a major canonical interest. The evidence that such activity was a major factor in the formulation of Ezekiel's original oracles would also account for the ease with which the canonical process adopted his oracles without great change.[45]

Again, to quote Childs, "This preoccupation with scripture on the part of Ezekiel should come as no surprise since the importance of the 'scroll' which is eaten is stressed right from the start (3.1ff.)."[46]

It is not the argument of this chapter that Ezekiel was *exclusively* influenced by the book of Exodus in some authoritative recension. The prophet shows evidence that he studied and drew from other Scriptures as well.[47] For example, scholarship has long studied the many links between Ezekiel and Leviticus, especially the Holiness Code[48] in

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concerning Israel's experience in Egypt the prophet borrows the motifs of God's self-disclosure by name and of his sworn promise of the land (cf. Exod 6:3, 6-8)" [emphasis added].

[44] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 285. This is one of Fishbane's literary criteria for recognizing the phenomenon of inner-biblical interpretation or, as he will sometimes term it, inner-biblical exegesis. This use of Fishbane's phrasing is not meant to suggest that, on this specific point, he himself would disavow critical conclusions regarding "tradition." Fishbane readily employs the terminology and methodology of tradition history (with important modifications mentioned in chapter 1 of this study)—note especially his use of Douglas Knight's ideas of *traditio* and *traditum.*

[45] Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 364.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Moshe Greenberg makes this point in his article, "Notes on the Influence of Tradition on Ezekiel," *JANES* 22 (1993): 29-37. See also Mark F. Rooker, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Ezekiel" (previously cited).

[48] For examples of some of the earliest work, see August Klostermann, "Ezechiel und das Heiligkeitsgesetz," in *Der Pentateuch*, 368-418 (Leipzig: Deichert, 1893 [article published previously in 1877]); Friedrich Horst, *Leviticus xvii–xxvi und Hezekiel: Eine Beitrag zur Pentateuchkritik* (Colmar: Barth, 1881); Lewis Bayles Paton, "The Holiness Code and Ezekiel," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (Jan. 1896): 98-115. As Zimmerli notes (*Ezekiel 1*, 46ff.), the relationship between the two is so close that some nineteenth century interpreters thought Ezekiel was either the author (Graf) or redactor (Horst) of the Holiness Code materials. Paton concluded that "the only theory which will explain all the facts of the

chapters 17–26. Those links are of huge theological and literary import.[49] There are also links between Ezekiel and the books of Genesis[50] and Numbers,[51] links clear enough to have impressed both Cook and Levitt Kohn as examples of inner-biblical interpretation.[52] One asks, what "Scriptures" existed in Ezekiel's day? Many Ezekiel scholars like Ellen Davis, impressed by this evidence, are led to conclude that "there must have existed before the fall [of Jerusalem] some form of Scripture, probably comprising the basic elements of the Torah and much of the Prophets."[53] Though a few excellent studies have been done in

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relation of Ez. to Lev. xvii–xxvi is that Ez. had this legislation before him as a written code" (115). Since then scholars have proposed other alternatives: e.g., Ezekiel and "H" must have drawn from a common source (Fohrer, *Hauptprobleme*, 144ff); Ezekiel is dependent upon a pre-exilic "H," which had edited an even earlier "P"; see Milgrom's AB commentary on Leviticus, and his "Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel," in *The Quest for Context and Meaning*, C. A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon, eds., 57-62 (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Also providing an in-depth comparison of the Hebrew text of Leviticus 26 with Ezekiel and coming to similar conclusions is Leslie C. Allen, "Excursus: The Relation between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 4–6," in *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1994), 92-96. Zimmerli thought that proposals of influence running in either direction were overly simplistic and he believed further work was necessary.

[49] We are indebted to many in past generations who have cataloged the numerous parallels. Among the more impressive ones recently detailed by Levitt Kohn are the following. Only in Ezekiel and so-called "H" do we read the phrase ונתתי גשם בעתם/בעתו, "provision of rain in its season" (Lev. 26:4; Ezek. 34:26); or דמיהם בם/דמו בו, "his/their blood [be] upon him/them" (Lev. 20:9, 11, 12, 13, 16; Ezek. 18:13; 33:5); or רדה בפרך, "ruling with harshness" (Lev. 25:43, 46, 53; Ezek. 34:4). Most impressive of all are the "sword" phrases only found in Lev. 26 and Ezekiel. How can there not be a genetic relationship when all of these phrases are reused in combination? They are הביא חרב על יכם, "bring the sword against you" (Lev. 26:25; Ezek. 5:17; 6:3; 11:8; 14:17); and הריק אחריכם חרב, "unsheathe the sword against you" (Lev. 26:33; Ezek. 5:2, 12; 12:14); and חרב תעבר בארץ, "a sword passing through the land" (Lev. 26:6; Ezek. 14:17). For discussion of these parallels, see Levitt Kohn, 39, 47, 67, 74.

[50] J. Oscar Boyd, "Ezekiel and the Modern Dating of the Pentateuch" (previously cited), 35-42, treats Ezekiel's use of P. W. L. Moran discusses Ezekiel's reworking of "J" material in "Gen 49,10 and Its Use in Ez 21,32," *Biblica* 39 (1958): 405-25.

[51] See, for example, (1) the expression "a day for a year" (יום לשנה יום לשנה) found nowhere else in the Old Testament but in Num. 14:34 and Ezek. 4:6; (2) the sharp response "hear now!" (שמעו־נא) which occurs in Num. 16:8; 20:10; and in Ezek. 18:25, but nowhere else in the Old Testament; and (3) the idiom "enough!" (רב־לכם), which is found in P texts associated with rebellion (Num. 16:3, 7) and in Ezekiel 44:6; 45:9. These examples are listed by Levitt Kohn, 67-9. Especially convincing is Boyd's close comparative reading of Num. 14:34 (P) and Ezek. 4:5-6. He shows that there are linked phrases beyond the expression "a day for a year." We read in so-called P, "for the number of days . . . forty days, a day for its year, a day for its year . . . you shall bear your iniquities." In Ezekiel we read, "according to the number of days . . . forty days, a day for its year, a day for its year . . . you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah." (See Boyd, "Ezekiel and the Modern Dating of the Pentateuch," 44-48.)

[52] See Stephen L. Cook, "Innerbiblical Interpretation in Ezekiel 44 and the History of Israel's Priesthood," *JBL* 114 (1995): 193-208; and Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 67-69.

[53] Ellen Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 30.

the past,[54] the task remains for someone to investigate in an exhaustive manner Ezekiel's complex literary relationships to other Scriptures.

2. Similarities Of Theme, Events, And Theology

The above linguistic and terminological parallels between Exodus and Ezekiel establish that the latter drew from the former. There is a clear pattern of reference back, not only to Exodus events in the prophet's historical retrospectives, and not only to a theological Exodus tradition, but also to Exodus texts. In short we have demonstrated a textual relationship and a dependency or "intertextuality of text production." If one grants this conclusion, arrived at inductively through research of specific examples, it may serve as a deductive "warrant" to read the many similarities of theme, events, and theology in Exodus and Ezekiel as further support for the claim that Ezekiel's prophecy is dependent on Exodus and that an intertextual relationship exists, which is fruitful to explore.

Though he may not have viewed himself as a second Moses, Ezekiel may very well have understood his calling as being similar in some fashion to Moses'.[55] Both prophets came from the same tribe (Levi), and according to the biblical story Moses necessarily had much to do with the establishment of the priesthood to which Ezekiel was heir so many centuries later. (It is commonplace in Ezekiel scholarship to note the personal tragedy, that the exiled son of Buzi was unable to enter the priesthood to assume official duties.) The account of Moses' life does not tell of his performing the regular priestly duties in the Tabernacle, but he did take on certain priestly functions, particularly intercessory prayer for the sinful people and mediation on their behalf before Yahweh (Exod. 32:11-13; possibly 17:11; see also Num. 14:13ff.). It was the function of the priest to enter God's presence as

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[54] Millar Burrows, *The Literary Relations of Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1925); Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship* (previously cited); and Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul.*

[55] McKeating has argued that Ezekiel regarded himself as a "second Moses" figure; or, if we choose not to speak of the prophet himself (McKeating's own inclination, on second thought), then the compiler or compilers "chose to present him" as such a second Moses. Ezekiel is "one who repeats Moses' work in a new setting, and, be it noted, *repeats it with more success than Moses himself*"; see "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" 104 (emphasis his).

a representative of the people and to act as God's representative to the people in proclaiming the law (Exod. 24:3-7; Ezek. 7:26; Ezra 7:10; Neh. 8; possibly Rom. 15:16[56]). Certainly, the Pentateuch teaches that Moses eminently performed these functions. He also offered sacrifices (Exod. 40:29) and sanctified the people by sprinkling blood upon them (Exod. 24:8). Besides his priestly ministry, Moses was also regarded in Old Testament days as a prophet without equal (Deut. 34:10; cf. Hos. 12:14). The merging of priestly and prophetic roles in Moses may well have been a profound idea to Ezekiel, the priest-prophet; it is certainly a topic of much debate in current Ezekiel scholarship, especially the relative prominence given to each role and the possible tension between them.[57]

Moses and Ezekiel are also linked by similar events in their lives recorded in the books of Exodus and Ezekiel. Both prophets are commissioned by God to go to a people steeped in idolatry and held captive in a foreign land, and they reintroduce Yahweh to his chastened people. As Moses was the prophetic agent of Yahweh, certified by signs which portend judgment (Exod. 4:9[J]), so is Ezekiel (Ezek. 4, 12 and 24:15-27). Both priest-prophets would face a rebellious nation as they urged Israel to hope in Yahweh, that God would take them from their captivity and lead them as his people into the land promised to their forefathers.

The perceptive reader sees similarities between the call narratives of Moses and Ezekiel. Recently, a scholar has begun exploring how Ezekiel's call narrative may be patterned on Moses' far more closely than has hitherto been recognized.[58] Might there be some

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[56] See Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 511. For an argument that Paul is not necessarily thinking of priestly activity, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979) 756.

[57] The interrelationship and possible tension between Ezekiel's twin callings are explored in J. J. Burden, "Esegiël, Priester en Profeet," *Theologica Evangelica* 18 (1985): 14-21; J. Asurmendi, "Ezéchiel: Prêtre et Prophète en Exil," *Le Monde de la Bible* 40 (Aug-Oct 1985): 27-30; Margaret S. Odell, "You Are What You Eat: Ezekiel and the Scroll," *JBL* 117 (1998): 229-48; Marvin A. Sweeney, "Ezekiel: Zadokite Priest and Visionary Prophet of the Exile," in *Society of Biblical Literature, 2000 Seminar Papers*, 728-51 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000); Andrew Mein, "Ezekiel as a Priest in Exile," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist*, ed., Johannes C. de Moor, 199-213, Oudtestamentische Studiën 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2001); and Corrine L. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, and Exile: Ezekiel as a Literary Construct," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, eds., Stephen L. Cook, and Corrine L. Patton, 73-89. One may note that Ezekiel's older contemporary, Jeremiah, also had the twin callings.

[58] D. Nathan Phinney, "The Prophetic Objection in Ezekiel IV 14 and Its Relation to Ezekiel's Call," *VT* 55 (2005): 75-88.

connection (an odd reversal) between the assistance which Moses requires (because of mouth trouble) in order to speak on Yahweh's behalf, and the mysterious hindrance of Ezekiel speaking on Yahweh's behalf? Both experienced, it seems, a bridling of the tongue, either because of a personal, developmental speech impediment (Exod. 4:10) or a divinely-ordered speech impediment (Ezek. 3:26). Both prophets had their mouths opened (Ezek. 3:27; 29:21) after a fashion so that they might fulfill their divine commission. It was true for both men that Yahweh helped them to speak and taught them what to say (Exod. 4:12; Ezek. 3:10, 27).[59]

In Ezekiel 14:1 the exilic prophet meets with the "elders of Israel" (זקני ישׂראל), just as Moses is reported to have done many hundreds of years before (Exod. 3:16 [J]).[60] Both men plead for the people when Yahweh seems ready to destroy them all in their idolatry (Exod. 32:9-14 [J/E]; Ezek. 9:8; 11:13). As already mentioned, the latter chapters of Exodus and Ezekiel reveal how both men met with God on top of mountains and there received visions and detailed plans for the future dwelling place of God: the Tabernacle in Moses' case (Exod. 25ff. [P]), and the new Temple in Ezekiel's vision (especially Ezek. 40–44). Both men observed the descent of the glory of Yahweh to fill the Tabernacle / Temple (Exod. 40:35 [P]; Ezek. 43:5). Some scholars, in their reading of Ezek. 43:18-27, are convinced that the prophet Ezekiel is "functioning like Moses in Exod 29:1-37 and Lev 8:15-34, consecrating the altar and executing the first offerings."[61] Might one expect that Ezekiel was conscious of these parallels?[62]

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[59] For a well-written and fascinating study of the bridling of the tongue and opening of the mouth motifs, see Gregory Yuri Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue and the Opening of the Mouth in Biblical Prophecy*, JSOTSup 311 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). A short note by James M. Kennedy, "Hebrew *piṯhôn peh* in the Book of Ezekiel," *VT* 41.2 (1991): 233-35, also examines the motif and makes important points: Yahweh opens the prophet's mouth that he may speak to Egypt—the land where Israel learned idolatry, and the only foreign nation comdemned in Ezekiel for idolatry (30:13)—and the result of the prophet's oracles is that Egypt comes to acknowledge the sovereignty of Yahweh.

[60] Previously noted was the contrast, spiritually speaking, between the *seventy* worshiping elders of Israel in Exodus 24:9ff. and the *seventy* in Ezekiel 8:11.

[61] Daniel I. Block, "In Search of Theological Meaning," 229, who refers to the conclusions of Friedrich Fechter in the chapter, "Priesthood in Exile according to the Book of Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, eds. Stephen L. Cook, and Corrine L. Patton, 27-41.

[62] Henry McKeating has done an extensive research of the many parallels between Ezekiel 40–48 and what he terms the Mosaic traditions (see "Ezekiel the 'Prophet like Moses'?" already cited); those parallels are "uncannily close" (103). McKeating's article is highly recommended reading. This dissertation does not

Exodus and Ezekiel are uniquely similar among all other Old Testament books in revealing God's explicit concern that honor be shown both to himself and his prophet. In Exodus Yahweh intends for the covenant people to put their trust in him and also to trust in Yahweh's servant (Exod. 14:31 [J]; 19:9 [J]). Ezekiel's oracles state that as the people come to recognize Yahweh, they also must recognize that Yahweh's true prophet is among them (Ezek. 2:5; 33:33). From a Christian theological perspective, much can be made of this linkage, especially in developing a Christocentric interpretation of Ezekiel. May it be suggested that the recognition of Yahweh and of his prophet are inseparable and the one cannot exist without the other? The reader is especially prompted to tie this idea of two-fold recognition to Exodus because Yahweh's insistence that Israel acknowledge his servant is expressed in a type of recognition formula—"When all this comes true . . . then they shall know that a prophet has been among them" (33:33)—which may echo the formulae of Exodus.

Throughout the Old Testament, the wealth represented by precious metals and jewelry was seen as a blessing from God. Ancient Israel understood that the wealth gained through "plundering the Egyptians" (Exod. 3:22) was a symbol of God's favor and a provision for his covenant people who had just been delivered from an impoverished slavery (Exod. 11:2-3 [E]; 12:35-36 [E]). So, when the Israelites used the plunder of Egypt to construct a Golden Calf at the base of Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32 [J/E]), it was an egregious sin against the Lord's generosity and represented a refusal to acknowledge that it was Yahweh who had delivered them from economic oppression and deprivation. Ezekiel's accusation that Israel had begun this idolatrous tradition in "the days of your youth" and that she has continued to provoke Yahweh with this same sin down to the prophet's day (16:10-17; 7:20) may be at least an indirect reference to the Golden Calf episode in Exodus. Was the Exodus not the most memorable time when Yahweh was understood to give the people of Israel silver and

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attempt to summarize his findings, though those findings may be interpreted as buttressing some of the claims advanced in this dissertation chapter. That *JSOT* article concludes that the book of Ezekiel does indeed present the prophet as another Moses: "this is either how the prophet sees himself, or how the compiler or compilers of the tradition chose to present him: as one who repeats Moses' work in a new setting. . ." (104, emphasis original). As an aside, the reader may note, with astonishment, that the name of Moses does not appear in Ezekiel's prophecy.

gold? Ezekiel conveys the Deity's description of the materials used in Israel's idolatry: it is "my gold and my silver which I gave to you," מזהבי ומכספי אשר נתתי לך (16:17).

In an ironic twist, clearly reminiscent of the Exodus story, Ezekiel warns that Yahweh will visit upon Israel—other nations, too—many of the same judgments Egypt experienced. Israel will hand over its jewelry as plunder to foreigners (7:21; cf. Exod. 12:36 [E]). Yahweh will turn the tables by leaving the women of Israel childless (5:17), even as Egypt bewailed the death of its firstborn (Exod. 12:29-30 [J]). The nation will experience "plagues"—in the general sense of "afflictions"—and they are of great variety. Plagues similar to those which struck Egypt mentioned by Ezekiel are: the land being drenched with flowing blood (32:6; cf. Exod. 7:17-21 [J/P]);[63] darkness (30:18; 32:7-8; cf. Exod. 10:21-23 [E]); hailstones (13:11; 38:22; cf. Exod. 9:13-26 [J/E]); pestilence (דבר, bubonic plague?);[64] and the destruction of cattle (32:13; cf. Exod. 9:1-7 [J]). Some of these plagues prophesied in Ezekiel strike Israel and some will be revisited upon Egypt. The general references to "plague" may also be connected with God's judgment by plague after the Golden Calf incident (Exod. 32:35 [E]).

The story in Ezekiel 9 of a linen-clad (לבש בדים) man with writing-kit and of guards going throughout the City of Jerusalem killing the idolaters without mercy may remind the Bible reader of the episode of the Golden Calf when a band of Levites was sent throughout the camp to kill many among the idolatrous people (Exod. 32:25-29 [J/E]). Ezekiel 9 may also bear a resemblance, for some readers, to the Passover account when it tells of a mark being given to the righteous and their being spared in the slaughter. Those without the mark, the ungodly, are judged with death, much like the Passover story in Exodus 12:12-13 [P] and 21-30 [J/P].[65]

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[63] John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969), 209. He plausibly views 32:6 as an allusion to the earlier plague, "as if [God were] to imply that Pharaoh's final hour of judgment will follow a pattern similar to God's earlier confrontation with him through Moses."

[64] Ezek. 5:12, 17; 6:11, 12; 7:15; 12:16; 14:19, 21; 28:23; 33:27; 38:22; cf. Exod. 5:3 [J]; 9:3, 15 [both J]; also Lev. 26:25 [Holiness Code]; and Deut. 28:21.

[65] Greenberg entertains the idea of a connection with the Passover account (Exod. 12:23) or the "frontlets" in Exod. 28:38. See *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 177. Greenberg notes in passing the old Jewish talmudic interpretation that those with the mark were not spared—but does this not conflict with 9:6?

Turning to those enigmatic final chapters of Ezekiel, one finds many parallels with the book of Exodus, most of which are similarities.[66] In a few cases Ezekiel proves dissimilar, but even these, by way of contrast, may point back to Exodus. Exceptions can serve to prove the rule. (One might suggest that some differences between a Tabernacle, which is a mobile sanctuary, and a Temple should be expected.)[67] In both revelations, Yahweh insists that all the details be conveyed to the people (Exod. 25:9 [P]; Ezek. 40:4). Exact measurements are recorded in each book (Ezek. 40–42; Exod. 26–27 [P]). Directions are given in Exodus to build the main altar with undressed stones and without steps to climb (20:24-26 [E]), whereas Ezekiel specifies dressed stones for the sacrificial tables (40:42) and steps for the main altar (43:13-17). Specifications for a wooden altar or "table that is before Yahweh" in Ezekiel 41:22 remind one of the table's counterpart in Exodus 25:23-30 [P]. There are descriptions of the courtyard surrounding the Temple/Tabernacle in Ezekiel 42:1 and Exodus 27:9ff. [P]. Directions for sacrifices of young bulls and rams without defect are common to both Ezekiel 43:23 and Exodus 29:1 [P]. There is a reference in Ezekiel 44:3 to the leader of the people (the prince) eating in the presence of Yahweh; the seventy elders of Exodus 24:11 [J] "saw God, and they ate and drank." Though some of these parallels are not exact, their number, thematic range, and wide distribution strongly suggest that Ezekiel was familiar with the whole book of Exodus (in some form).

Numerous Bible scholars have taken the view that liberation is the key theme of Exodus 1–15. Lyle Eslinger, however, has published an article which argues that the knowledge of God is the primary theme of that pivotal section of Scripture.[68] If Eslinger is correct in his judgment—and it is very likely that he is—one gains further encouragement to trace Ezekiel's dependence on Exodus from a theological perspective. That Ezekiel is dominated by the same motif, the knowledge of God, is rarely challenged today from any quarter. The reader should expect to hear many clear echoes of Exodus in the prophecy

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[66] Block has made a good argument that we should look beyond Exodus to compare Ezekiel 40–48 with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. See *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, pp. 498-501.

[67] Professor Robert I. Vasholz, in private correspondence, 1995.

[68] Lyle Eslinger, "Freedom or Knowledge? Perspective and Purpose in the Exodus Narrative (Exodus 1–15)," *JSOT* 52 (1991): 43-60.

which includes the most extended and profound theological reflection on the Exodus event found in any of the prophets.[69]

Yet another strong theological theme in Ezekiel which has attracted attention in recent scholarship is the presence and absence of God.[70] Those people who had reason to believe they had been abandoned by God, that is, the exiles in Babylonia, see the approach of the Lord (in a vision report). Also, the word of Yahweh comes to a prophet among the exiles. This was real reassurance that, though the Jews with Ezekiel had been exiled from the land and the Temple, they were not exiled from Yahweh. All the while, those back in the land believed that they themselves were the blessed ones (33:24); the Jerusalemites said that the exiles "are far from Yahweh;[71] this land has been given to us as our heritage" (11:15). But according to Ezekiel's visions in chapters 8–11, God was actually abandoning Jerusalem that he might become a sanctuary for those who had been scattered among many countries (11:16; cf. Jer. 24:1-10 and 29:1-14). It would be the exiles who would know God's blessing and inherit the land in future days (Ezek. 11:17). This divine presence-absence theme is also clearly found in Exodus,[72] and the two books may profitably be read together

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[69] See especially chapters 16, 20, and 23. All of Israel's troubles, according to Ezekiel, began with the nation forgetting the covenant Yahweh made with Israel בימי נעוריך, "in the days of your youth" (16:60; see other references to the period using this phrase in 16:22, 43; 23:19). References to Israel's "youth" are common in the prophetic denunciations of the nation (see Hos. 2:15 [MT 2:17]; Jer. 2:2; 22:21). In Ezekiel there is also repeated mention of the "fathers" (אבות), but in those passages (2:3; 18:2; 20:4, 18, 24, 27, 30, 36, 42; 36:28; 37:25; 47:14) the prophet does not have the patriarchs of Genesis specifically in mind. Rather, "he refers more generally to the ancestors of the present generation" (Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 51).

[70] See, for example, John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (previously cited); Daniel I. Block, "Divine Abandonment: Ezekiel's Adaptation of an Ancient Near Eastern Motif" (previously cited); John T. Strong, "God's *Kabôd:* The Presence of Yahweh in the Book of Ezekiel," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (previously cited); Steven S. Tuell, "Divine Presence and Absence in Ezekiel's Prophecy," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (previously cited); and Paul R. House, "The God Who Is Present, Ezekiel," in *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998). For more widely ranging discussions of the absence theme in Old Testament literature, see Samuel E. Balentine, *The Hidden God: The Hiding of the Face of God in the Old Testament* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); and Joel S. Burnett, "The Question of Divine Absence in Israelite and West Semitic Religion," *CBQ* 67.2 (2005): 215-35.

[71] The translation here adopted, "they are far from Yahweh," involves a repointing of the imperative as a perfect and is widely accepted among interpreters. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 229; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 341. Greenberg explains the MT's imperative, but he also admits that the re-vocalization allows the text to "read more smoothly" (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 189).

[72] Hendrik Bosman, "The Absence and Presence of God in the Book of Exodus as Theological Synthesis," *Scriptura* 85 (2004): 1-13. Bosman clearly shows that, while the divine presence-absence

along this line. Having the divine presence is a sign of God's favor (Exod. 33:13-14, 16), while divine absence is regarded as a disasterous privation (33:3-6). The book of Exodus also teaches that the divine presence is the mark of God's people, distinguishing them from the other peoples of the earth (33:16). If one reads Ezekiel, then, in the light of Exodus, the visions of Yahweh's glory indicate that the future of the covenant lies with the exiles.

3. Ezekiel's Reshaping Of Earlier "Scriptural Traditions"

> No one reading Ezekiel with a knowledge of biblical literature can miss Ezekiel's frequent allusions to the language, the figures and the stories found elsewhere in that literature. While these allusions are, in the gross, sufficiently similar for establishing the connection, in particulars there is almost always a divergence large enough to raise the question, whether the prophet has purposely skewed the traditional material, or merely represents a version of it different from the extant records. From evidence that the prophet himself played variations on a given theme, the likelihood is that such divergencies arise from his own shaping of the tradition rather than from otherwise unknown varieties of it.
>
> – Greenberg[73]

It would be a mistake to dismiss Ezekiel as a "dependent mind" or to disparage him as an inveterate quoter or borrower. Though the prophet evidences his schooling "in the various types of traditional literature that are reflected in his oracles (narratives, prophecy, laments, law, ritual, temple plans),"[74] he frequently revises, reframes, and even subverts the older Scriptural traditions. Along with evoking and invoking, he may revoke. One need not look far to find examples of this pattern. Instead of the lion of Judah seeing the submission *of* the nations, as in Genesis 49 (J), the "lions" of Judah are dragged away in submission *to* the nations (Ezek. 19). The noble lion who was intended to rule God's people becomes the parody of voracious lions tearing at God's people (Ezek. 22:25).[75] The dear, sentimental

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dialectic may be interrelated with the "fear of Yahweh" theme—the primary thrust of the article—it is even broader than that and can be traced in many passages which do not contain the fear motif. See also R. P. Carroll, "Strange Fire: Abstract of Presence Absent in the Text, Meditations on Exodus 3," *JSOT* 61 (1994): 39-58; and the book which, more than any other, sparked interest among biblical scholars in the presence-absence tension: Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

[73] Moshe Greenberg, "Notes on the Influence of Tradition on Ezekiel," 29.

[74] Ibid.

[75] In Ezekiel 22:25 we read "chiefs" with the LXX (οι αφηγουμενοι), against "prophets" in the MT. Even Greenberg, who is quite conservative toward the MT, agrees that the MT is corrupt at this point and that "chiefs" must be preferred (*Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 462).

figure of the vine was once used to picture Israel, and it was a figure associated with the exodus event and the conquest (Psa. 80:9). But that vine is now to be regarded as utterly worthless in Ezekiel's reuse of the figure (Ezek. 15; 19:10ff.; cf. chapter 17).[76] Further, the metaphor of marriage and the figure of Israel as a bride in covenant with Yahweh is famously employed in a pejorative manner in Ezekiel's harshest invective (chapters 16 and 23). This pattern of revision and subversion shows up in Ezekiel's use of many Scriptural traditions and must also be taken into account as one reads Ezekiel's references back to the exodus story and its language (this may include the recognition formula).

Levitt Kohn has lately reminded scholarship that Ezekiel's severely negative reuse of traditional Scriptural motifs or traditional themes is matched by negative reuse of terminology in denouncing the people's evil and in prophesying judgment. A first representative example of such terms would be the ironic reversal in Ezekiel's use of נאק and נאקה. In their exodus out of Egypt, God's people had found deliverance from their hardships and the groaning elicited by slave-masters' cruelty (Exod. 2:24; 6:5). Their mourning had turned to dancing long ago (Exod. 15). But the prophet Ezekiel foretells the intense groaning of the Egyptians, Pharaoh in particular, when God deals with them yet again: ונאק נאקות חלל לפניו (30:24).[77] The memory of a gross injustice in history remains, and Ezekiel's oracle announces that the turning of the tables is still God's plan.

A second example of the transmogrification of terminology in Ezekiel would be the reversal in the use of "hard heart" (קשׁה לב). In Exodus Yahweh announced that he would harden Pharaoh's heart (7:3 [P]), but Ezekiel says that the covenant people are hard hearted (3:7).[78] Such an association is both a sharply pointed condemnation of Israel and, at least by implication, a justification for the coming judgment which Yahweh will mete out to a nation that acts like the hated adversary in the days of Moses, the adversary who reportedly

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[76] Greenberg ("Notes on the Influence," 32) characterizes Ezekiel's language as "a grotesque distortion of the traditional use of the vine as a figure for Israel."

[77] This Hebrew root is rarely found in the Old Testament. Besides Exodus and Ezekiel, the only occurrences are in Job 24:12 (verb) and Judges 2:18 (noun). Our conclusions after using a concordance of the Hebrew Bible are confirmed in Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 66-67.

[78] Levitt Kohn also notes the reversal in the use of קשׁה לב; see *A New Heart and a New Soul*, 72.

said, לא ידעתי את־יהוה (Exod. 5:2). What makes this shared terminology all the more convincing as a likely example of inner-biblical interpretation are the parallel "hard heart" texts in both Exodus and Ezekiel where חזק replaces קשה; see Exod. 7:13 (P) and Ezek. 2:4. Both Bible books share the same variable vocabulary in phrasing the idea. Certainly worth noting as well is the parallel imagery, לב האבן, in Ezekiel 36:26).

Ezekiel was not alone among the prophets in his strongly negative *Vergegenwärtigung* or "reactualization" of ancient traditions.[79] Years, even centuries, prior to his ministry, Jeremiah and Hosea had used the marriage metaphor—and the conjoined whoredom metaphor—in condemning the unfaithfulness of the covenant people,[80] though not as graphically and shockingly as Ezekiel. Also, the vine figure appears in earlier prophetic denunciations of Israel.[81] What is new and noteworthy as a departure from previous prophecies is Ezekiel's more negative assessment of Israel's earliest (spiritual) history. Whereas a Hosea or an Isaiah looked back to a good and pure beginning, when Israel had loved her Savior God, Ezekiel tells the story differently.[82] Other prophets had contrasted the nation's "first love" with her later "Canaanization"[83] and her present coldness toward the divine Lover. Israel should repent and return to the Husband she once followed. Ezekiel, by contrast, writes that Israel "from the days of her youth" has proved false and faithless. Israel's idolatry had its beginning in Egypt, not Canaan (Ezek. 20:7).[84] The prophet writes,

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[79] Zimmerli makes a strong point of this, that it is characteristic for the pre-exilic prophets and for Ezekiel to reframe older positive traditions in the proclamation of judgment. See the previously cited "Prophetic Proclamation and Reinterpretation," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. Douglas Knight, 98f. This characteristic "reframing" will be discussed further in chapter six below.

[80] See, for example, Jeremiah 2-3, and compare Isaiah 1:21.

[81] Isaiah 5:7; Hosea 10:1.

[82] Zimmerli made this same point in one of his first essays on Ezekiel. See "The Word of God in the Book of Ezekiel," 3f. However, a careful reading of Isaiah 48:4-8 may lead one to modify this conclusion. See Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 198.

[83] This term was used by Daniel I. Block in a 1988 R. K. Harrison Festschrift article, and later by Dwight R. Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation History*, BZAW 191 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 53ff.

[84] In another place, it might seem possible that Ezekiel traces the spiritual degeneracy back even further than the Egyptian sojourn. In 16:3 we read a reference to the people's birth (מכרתיך ומלדתיך) in the land of the Canaanites. Could this hark back to the Patriarchs? This is unlikely since the reference is specifically to Jerusalem and Samaria, and Ezekiel is playing rhetorically with the pagan foundations of those cities (metonyms for the northern and southern kingdoms). This is apparent in the accompanying mention of the city of Sodom. Ezekiel's characterization was an awful affront to the Zion theology. Block

"they whored in Egypt, in their youth they whored," ותזנינה במצרים בנעוריהן זנו (23:3a). Greenberg thinks this prophetic perspective was entirely unprecedented;[85] whether it was or was not, it provides the backdrop for Ezekiel's proclamation of a new Exodus in God's plan. In simple, perhaps even homiletical, terms, one might posit that Ezekiel has the view that Israel was taken out of Egypt without Egypt being taken out of the people, that is, without Egyptian idolatry being removed from the people's hearts. Another, more radical, more deeply spiritual work of redemption is needed, if the nation is to know their God as Yahweh. This perspective will be examined further in chapter five.

B. Ezekiel's Recognition Formula Borrowed from Exodus

Two distinct questions suggest themselves when one studies the issue of the origin of the refrain. First, scholars have inquired as to the formula's absolute origin (or its initial usage in the religious speech and literature of ancient Israel). The second question may be separated from the first and may possibly yield a different answer: what source inspired the prophet Ezekiel to use the recognition formula? Many scholars, Zimmerli among them, have given differing answers to the two questions. This section of chapter four will narrowly focus upon the question of *Ezekiel's* source and inspiration for his extensive employment of the formula. Moreover, the approach here heeds Paul Joyce's recommendation[86] that the refrain be taken as a whole and not broken down into two constituent parts (as Zimmerli

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speaks of Israel's Patriarch and Matriarch and offers a slightly different perspective: "The prophet thereby announces that contrary to cherished tradition, Jerusalem's spiritual roots derive not from the pious Abraham and Sarah but from the pagan peoples whom the Israelites had been charged to drive out" (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 475).

[85] *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 365. A counter-argument would be that Israel's idolatry in Exod. 32:4 can be construed as a return to earlier religious practices. The older commentaries suggest that the idolatry is "cast" as an honoring of gods who brought them out of Egypt, and that the calf-image derives from Egypt. That older viewpoint regarding the calf is summarized by Childs (*The Book of Exodus*, 565): "There is obviously a *religionsgeschichtliche* background to the choice. Among the Egyptians the bull represented Apis in the pantheon while among the Canaanites he symbolized Baal." Another novelty of Ezekiel, according to Greenberg, is the "remarkable oath to exile the people, taken by God even before they entered the land." About this, "Pentateuchal traditions are silent" (368). Has he failed to consider Deuteronomy 4:27? Though that text does not contain the term גלה or גלות, it certainly appears to point to an experience of exile.

[86] Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response*, 92.

attempts). The recognition formula and the issue of its source are best understood by treating the formula *per se*, not as an amalgamation of a "statement of recognition" and a "self-introductory formula," each with a separate, prior life of its own.

1. THE FORMULA'S USAGE THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

Though there is not space in this narrowly defined dissertation to discuss at much length the use of the recognition formula in other parts of the Old Testament, those formulae must be noted (see also the appendix to chapter three). Zimmerli was correct in saying that the refrain "is by no means an original coinage of Ezekiel himself."[87] Therefore, a survey of the refrain in other parts of the Old Testament presents the student of Ezekiel with various possible sources. (There are fascinating parallels between the recognition formula and formulae used in the secular and religious literature of surrounding nations,[88] but most scholarship has rightly concluded that we must search for an Old Testament, rather than extra-biblical, source.)

The formula is prominently used in Exodus[89]—in both early and late sources, as the critics usually delineate those alleged sources. Thus, in the older style *Literarkritik* the connection between the exodus story and the recognition formula is more ancient than any allegedly post-exilic Priestly Source, unless J is dated late[90] or through redaction criticism the formula is designated as a secondary accretion in the early sources of J and E.[91] The following table indicates where the recognition formulae of Exodus occur, with regard to the old source criticism.

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[87] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 41.

[88] See Harner, *Grace and Law in Second Isaiah*, chapter II; and Bodi, "Terminological and Thematic Comparisons," 324ff. In chapter six we will note yet another text having similarities to Ezekiel's recognition formula: "The Covenant of Aššur" (K 2401 / ABRT 1 22f): "The Second Oracle of Salvation" (*ca.* 673 B.C.).

[89] The recognition formula appears in 6:7; 7:5,17; 8:22; 10:2; 14:4,18; 16:12; 29:46; 31:13. Variations which seem at least somewhat related to the strict formula are found in: 8:10; 9:14, 29; 11:7; 16:6, 8; 18:11.

[90] Here we have in mind the revisionist scholarship of Van Seters, et al.

[91] Long ago this was noted as an option, though not necessarily recommended, by S. R. Driver. See his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (previously cited), 25.

Table 8. — Traditional Source Analysis and the Recognition Formulae in Exodus

	DRIVER	CHILDS
6:7	**P**	**P**
7:5	**P**	**P**
7:17	**J**	**J**
8:22	**J**	**J**
10:2	**J**	**Addition**
14:4	**P**	**P**
14:18	**P**	**P**
16:12	**P**	**P**
29:46	**P**	**P**
31:13	**P** (H) Driver, 297	**P**
*8:10**	*J*	*J*
*9:14**	*J*	*Addition*
*9:29**	*J*	*J*
*11:7**	*J*	*J*
*16:6**	*P*	*P*
*16:8**	*P*	*P*

True recognition formulae (according to the definition of this dissertation) are marked by bold type, while those texts which are merely related to the refrain have italics and asterisks. The reference tools used were Driver's *Introduction*, and Childs' Exodus commentary.

The contemporary reader of the book of Exodus may find two conclusions appealing as the data regarding the recognition formulae are reviewed. The first is that, without recourse to redaction critical proposals, the likelihood of the refrain appearing in two separate, completely independent accounts of the Exodus event is terribly small. Source criticism finds difficulty, perhaps even founders, in distinguishing and isolating "documents" which include the same *distinctive* theological refrain—and refrains in the same exact strict and expanded forms.[92] The second conclusion is that, if one does accept some theory approximating the traditional Documentary Hypothesis, the appearance of the recognition formula in J portions of the Exodus narrative means the refrain is still ancient

[92] Such difficulties have led a number of Pentateuch scholars to view P more as a redactor than an independent source document.

enough to have influenced all the writing prophets, from Hosea[93] and First Isaiah[94] down to Ezekiel and Zechariah.

One asks, is Fohrer correct in tracing Ezekiel's usage back to Exodus? Zimmerli strongly asserts, contrariwise, that Ezekiel's formula derives from a certain prophetic tradition which comes to expression in 1 Kings 20:13 and 28. Other scholars like Blank and May, writing prior to Zimmerli, point to Second Isaiah as Ezekiel's source. Isaiah has recognition formulae in 45:3; 49:23, 26; and 60:16; additionally, variations which may easily be related to the formula are found in 41:20; 45:6 and 52:6.

Only two other Bible books include the recognition formula proper: Deuteronomy 29:6 (MT 29:5) and Joel 3:17. (An additional text in the latter book, Joel 2:27, breaks into the standard structure of the recognition formula with the interrupting phrase "that I am in Israel," and an additional text in Hosea is rejected on text-critical grounds).[95] Because of its uncertain dating, Joel scarcely enters into the scholarly discussion regarding the origin of Ezekiel's formula.[96] Also to be considered is the fact that the Joel formulae are so heavily

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[93] A text such as Hosea 13:4—"I am Yahweh your God since the land of Egypt; you know no god apart from me; besides me there is no savior"—indicates that both the self-presentation statement (I am Yahweh your God) and a highly theological use of the verb ידע were associated with the Exodus story from the earliest period of the writing prophets. Further, it has been argued that in Hosea 13:4 "the participial form 'saviour' recalls the use of the verb in the summary statement of Exod 14.30 'that day the Lord saved Israel from the power of Egypt' (NEB)." See A. A. Macintosh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Hosea*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 527.

[94] Here we have in mind the restoration oracle spoken to Egypt in Isaiah 19:16-25, which recalls some version of the Exodus story and says "Yahweh will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they shall know Yahweh" (21). Note, too, the references here to "the uplifted hand" (16), a new "smiting or plague" (נגף, 22; cf. Exod. 7:27; 12:13, 23, 27), and a Moses-like "savior" to rescue Egypt (20).

[95] Hosea 2:20 [2:22 in the Hebrew] should not be counted, though the Vulgate, some Hebrew manuscripts, and Cyril of Alexandria read וידעת כי אני יהוה instead of the simple "know Yahweh" (וידעת את־יהוה). On the text-critical issue, see Hans Walter Wolff, "Erkenntnis Gottes im Alten Testament," *Evangelische Theologie* 15 (1955): 428ff.; idem, *Hosea*, trans. Gary Stansell, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 46; Francis I Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea*, AB 24 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980), 283-84; and Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 56, 60. Wolff suggests that the readings with a recognition formula are corruptions showing the influence of Ezekiel and/or Second Isaiah.

[96] Since Duhm's commentary in the 19th century, critical scholarship has tended to date Joel's prophecy much later than the surrounding books of Hosea and Amos. Barton says that "a postexilic date has largely established itself as the preferred one" among commentators on Joel. See John Barton, *Joel and Obadiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 15. And the passage in Joel most commonly dated latest (perhaps even secondary) is 2:28–3:21, which contains the recognition formula. For full-length arguments that Joel must date from the post-exilic era, see Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos*, trans. Waldemar Janzen, *et al.*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); and James L. Crenshaw, *Joel*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1995). Recent conservative discussions of lines of evidence are Douglas

loaded with added phrasing on the end and sound rather different from any formula in Ezekiel; Joel 3:17 (MT 4:17] reads, "And you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain." The text in Deuteronomy also does not receive much serious consideration because it is clearly connected to a historical recollection of the experiences of those redeemed out of Egyptian slavery and their children who wandered in the wilderness.[97] Many other Old Testament passages, bearing some resemblance to the recognition formula, could be cited at this point,[98] but scholars have consistently narrowed the field of Ezekiel's potential sources to Exodus, 1 Kings and Isaiah. These will be discussed in canonical order, with particular attention paid to Exodus. Conclusions drawn in the first chapter of this dissertation regarding an early (pre-exilic) dating of the critics' "Priestly Document" will have a definite bearing upon the discussion of Exodus as a potential source for Ezekiel.

2. Similarities Between The Formulae In Exodus And Ezekiel

Leaving aside completely the prophecy of Ezekiel, there are more occurrences of the recognition formula in Exodus than in any other book of the Bible. Indeed, Exodus contains nearly twice the formulae found in Isaiah and 1 Kings *combined*. At least initially, therefore, the interpreter ought to give a decided preference to Exodus as an influence on later Scripture to use the formula. Is it not likely that the high count of refrains and their wide distribution over many chapters in Exodus (chapters 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 29, 31) inspired an even higher count and even wider distribution in Ezekiel?

Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 224-35; and Raymond B. Dillard, and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 364-67.

[97] It would be a mistake, however, to ignore Deut. 29:6 completely. The recognition formula located there, in that theological context (29:2-6, or vv. 1-5 in the MT), tends to strengthen the argument that the formula is predominantly associated with the Exodus and Wilderness narratives. The refrain appears rooted in the Exodus story.

[98] Some of the following have already been mentioned in chapter 3 above: Numbers 16:28, 30; Deuteronomy 4:35; Joshua 3:7, 10; 4:24; 1 Samuel 17:46; 1 Kings 8:43, 60; 2 Kings 5:8 (cf. Ezek. 2:5); 2 Kings 19:19 (= Isaiah 37:20); Psalm 46:10; 83:18; 100:3; Jeremiah 9:24; 16:21; 24:7; Hosea 2:20; 13:4; Zechariah 2:9.

Both Exodus and Ezekiel include recognition formulae which are addressed to Israel and the nations (Egypt alone in the case of Exodus). That is, both Israel and the nations "shall know that I am Yahweh." Interestingly, as in Exodus, formulae in Ezekiel are addressed to Egypt and to Pharaoh himself—no other king is addressed with the formula in Ezekiel. That Egypt is selected out by Ezekiel for special attention is clear from the proportionally greater number of chapters devoted to oracles against Egypt and the fact that far more of the formulae (nine total) are addressed to Egypt than to any other foreign nation—Edom follows with four formulae spoken against her, all in Ezekiel 35 (but see also 25:14). The percentage of total recognition formulae in each book which speak of the nations' recognition of Yahweh, as over against formulae in which Israel will recognize him, is similar: 50% in Exodus and 36% in Ezekiel.[99]

Exodus and Ezekiel uniquely employ the recognition formula in oracles of both judgment and salvation. Nowhere else in the Bible is a recognition formula attached to an oracle of judgment.[100] This is a most important similarity, while a key difference between the two books is the absence of judgment oracles spoken against Israel in the book of Exodus. That is, when the refrain in Exodus speaks of Israel knowing Yahweh, it is used in a wholly positive way, to speak of Yahweh's deliverance of Israel and his blessing upon her. When the refrain appears within Exodus to speak of judgment, pagan Egypt is always the subject, never Israel. Ezekiel, by contrast, frequently employs the formula as a conclusion to oracles of judgment against Israel. This discontinuity or disjunction is clearly important for theological interpretation and will be treated in chapter six below.

In taking a closer look at the content of the formulae in Exodus and Ezekiel, one ought to make ready use of Paul Joyce's categorization of Ezekiel's formulae in a table format (see Table 1). A comparison study yields the conclusion that Ezekiel largely conformed to

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[99] By comparison, 1 & 2 Kings contains no recognition formulae addressed to the nations. (Three loosely "related phrases" in Kings speak *of* the nations, but are not addressed to the nations.) The book of Isaiah has a single formula addressed to a foreigner, Cyrus (45:3), and one formula which speaks *of* the nations knowing Yahweh as Israel's Savior (49:26).

[100] Some might suggest Isaiah 49:26 as a contradiction of this claim, but this oracle also ties the recognition of Yahweh among the nations to Israel's salvation: "Those who trouble you, I will trouble, and your children I will save" (49:25b).

the normal use of the refrain in Exodus—the one exception being in the stunning category 'G'.[101] Excepting category 'G', the formulae in each book primarily speak the messages that a) the nations will know I am Yahweh when they are punished (Joyce's category 'A'), and b) Israel will know I am Yahweh when I deliver her (category 'H'). In neither Bible book does one find a formula fitting category 'B',[102] 'C',[103] or 'F'.[104]

Variations and expansions of the recognition formula, along with what is termed the strict form, appear in both Exodus and Ezekiel. Thus, if Exodus is indeed the source (as we argue), the variations in formulae would not so much reflect Ezekiel exercising great liberty in composition; rather they reflect a varied usage in Scripture prior to his time. A detailed comparison of the two books reveals that the variations and expansions are remarkably similar in style and in their distribution throughout the books in which they are found.[105] Some expansions are precisely the same, such as וידעתם כי אני יהוה אלהיכם "you shall know that I am Yahweh *your God*" (Exod. 6:7 [P]; Ezek. 20:20; 35:27) and also וידעו כי אני יהוה אלהיהם "they shall know that I am Yahweh *their God*" (Exod. 29:46 [P]; Ezek. 39:22, 28). The latter of these two expanded formulae is found only in Exodus and Ezekiel.

A closer look at the specific expansion just noted, ". . . shall know that I am Yahweh your/their God," reveals another example of how Ezekiel conformed to the normal use of the refrain in Exodus. In both books, this expansion is always addressed to Israel in oracles

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[101] Israel will know "I am Yahweh" when Yahweh punishes Israel.

[102] The nations will know "I am Yahweh" when Yahweh delivers the nations.

[103] The nations will know "I am Yahweh" when Yahweh punishes Israel.

[104] Israel will know "I am Yahweh" when Yahweh delivers the nations.

[105] With one exception to the rule, all of the recognition formulae in Exodus have an exact or nearly exact companion in Ezekiel. Exodus 10:2 is the same as seventeen formulae in Ezekiel (6:7; 6:13; 7:4; 11:10; 11:12; 12:20; 13:14; 14:8; 15:7; 20:38; 20:42, 44; 25:5; 35:9; 36:11; 37:6, 13). There are an additional two formulae in Ezekiel that are nearly exact (13:21 and 23 have וידעתן instead of וידעתם). Exodus 29:46 is the same as two formulae in Ezekiel (28:26; 39:28). Exodus 6:7 and 16:12 are nearly exact companions to Ezekiel 20:20 (which has an infinitive construct rather than a perfect). Exodus 7:5; 14:4 and 18 have a nearly exact analogue in Ezekiel 29:6 (the latter reads כל־ישבי מצרים instead of simple מצרים). Exodus 7:17 only differs from Ezekiel 16:62; 22:16; 25:7; and 35:4 in that the latter have perfect verbs instead of the imperfect. Exodus 31:13 is nearly the same as Ezekiel 20:12 (which reads מקדשם instead of מקדשכם) and as Ezek. 20:20 (which lacks the participle). The one Exodus formula without a counterpart is 8:22 [MT 8:18]: למען תדע כי אני יהוה בקרב הארץ.

of salvation. Not one of the occurrences of this expansion is spoken to the nations. Likewise, Israel is never said to "know that I am Yahweh *your/their God"* in judgment.

One expansion in Ezekiel, at 20:12, can hardly be taken any other way than as a direct quotation from Exodus 31:13 (with only the minor change from third to second person, in order to fit the context).[106]

(Exodus 31:13) לדעת כי אני יהוה מקדשכם

(Ezekiel 20:12) לדעת כי אני יהוה מקדשם

Setting these two texts side by side makes for a startling comparison because the additional phrase ("who makes you holy") and the infinitive construct appear in both formulae. There is no other occurrence of a recognition formula containing מקדש in the entire Old Testament, except for Ezekiel 37:28. The infinitive construct is quite rare among occurrences of the refrain: nowhere else in the Old Testament besides these two chapters does one find the "strict form" with the infinitive construct; but cf. Jer. 9:24 [MT 23]. No other recognition formula in the Old Testament, besides these two (plus the companion formula in Ezek. 20:20), is linked theologically with the Sabbath. Finally, nowhere else in the Old Testament besides Exodus 31:12-17 and Ezekiel 20:12, 20 is the Sabbath said to be a sign (אות) of Yahweh's gracious presence. It seems impossible to explain these parallel texts by reference to "tradition," for here we have not only the same complex of ideas and joined motifs—Sabbath as a sign, the recognition formula, Yahweh making his people holy, the desecration (חלל) of the Sabbath—but also the same exact, extremely rare grammatical form (ידע infinitive construct with the formula).

Another telling similarity between Ezekiel and Exodus is the formulation and usage of what this study has termed the "related phrases," or "ידע phrases similar to the recognition formula." These replace the usual object clause, כי אני יהוה, with another. Examples would be, "they shall know *my vengeance*" (Ezek. 25:14) or "the nations shall know *me* when I show myself holy through you" (Ezek. 38:16). With only one exception

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[106] See also the discussion of this text in section A.1. above.

(Exod. 16:6), all the related phrases in both books are spoken in judgment.[107] The contrast is obvious when one compares the pattern observed in Ezekiel and Exodus with the "related phrases" in other books. Outside Ezekiel and Exodus all the "related phrases" speak a positive message (in a context of worship perhaps or an oracle of salvation), with a single exception. The loosely related phrase in Jer. 44:29 reads, "so that you shall know that my words of calamity against you will surely stand."

Obviously, there are several lines of evidence pointing toward the conclusion that Ezekiel's use of the recognition formula is derived from and even modeled upon the formulae of Exodus. It is best to view Ezekiel's formulae as part of and as a continuation of the pattern of broad dependence upon Exodus argued earlier in this chapter. However, before ending the discussion of the origin of Ezekiel's formula, possible ties to 1 Kings or Isaiah should be explored. Might those two books have influenced the book of Ezekiel?

3. Comparing Ezekiel's Formulae With Those In Kings And Isaiah

While the story in 1 Kings 20 undoubtedly encouraged the employment of the recognition formula in prophetic circles, it seems unwise to trace Ezekiel's extraordinarily elaborate and extended use to the two occurrences in one chapter of Kings. What other evidence can Zimmerli adduce, besides the formulae, which connects Ezekiel, his language, and his theology to 1 Kings 20 or the prophetic tradition in the Northern Kingdom which the Kings narrative reflects? Some might consider it a decisive point against Zimmerli's proposal, that he has largely failed to provide textual grounds for that link. Though both formulae in Kings have many exact parallels in phraseology with formulae in Ezekiel,[108] the

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[107] A full listing of those related phrases—also available in chapter three, section A and the "Appendix."—is provided here: Exod. 8:10 [MT 8:6]; 9:14, 29; 11:7; 16:6; and Ezek. 2:5; 14:23; 25:14; 33:33; 38:16; 39:23. The "related phrases" in Ezekiel with ראה instead of ידע are also spoken only in judgment (20:48 [MT 21:4]; 39:21).

[108] The formula in 1 Kings 20:13 is phrased exactly the same as four texts in Ezekiel (16:62; 22:16; 25:7; 35:4), while 1 Kings 20:28—like Exodus 10:2—is exactly parallel to seventeen formulae in Ezekiel (6:7; 6:13; 7:4; 11:10; 11:12; 12:20; 13:14; 14:8; 15:7; 20:38; 20:42, 44; 25:5; 35:9; 36:11; 37:6, 13). There are an additional two formulae in Ezekiel that are nearly exact (13:21 and 23 have וידעתן instead of וידעתם).

message carried by the Kings formulae is uncommon in Ezekiel. Paul Joyce, in an examination of the formulae in 1 Kings 20, concludes that

> Of Zimmerli's examples, 1 Kgs 20.13, 28 would belong in the category 'E,' and 2 Kgs 19.19 in category 'D', both categories in which there are few cases in Ezekiel. The remaining examples cited by Zimmerli (1 Kgs 17.24; 2 Kgs 5.8, 15) would belong in category 'B', of which there are no cases in Ezekiel.[109]

And other difficulties exist as well. Both formulae in 1 Kings 20 have only second person verbs, not both second and third person, as in Ezekiel. Both formulae in Kings are "strict forms"; there are no expansions, as are frequently found in Ezekiel. In 1 Kings 20 only Israel is said to come to a recognition of Yahweh, not Israel *and* the nations.[110] Fohrer's criticism of Zimmerli's position is a cogent one: "the occurrence of this formula twice in anecdotal prophetical utterances does not provide a broad enough basis for the assumption that centuries later Ezekiel made use of an early literary type,"[111] represented here.

If not 1 Kings, might Isaiah have served as Ezekiel's prototype in the use of the refrain? Critical scholars who view the vast number of formulae in Ezekiel as coming from the prophet's own hand will not have any motivation to trace a literary dependence upon Second Isaiah, an exilic or post-exilic prophet. Zimmerli, for example, speaks of Second Isaiah as "a prophet of the generation after Ezekiel."[112] According to the critics' chronology, the idea of Ezekielian dependence upon Isaiah must be put out of mind. (On form-critical grounds also, Zimmerli rules out Isaianic dependence upon Ezekiel.) However, for many conservative interpreters who attribute the whole book of Isaiah (substantially in its present form) to the eighth century prophet and who uphold the unity of the prophecy,[113] the notion of Ezekielian dependence upon Isaiah need not be ruled out from the start.

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[109] Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response*, 155, note 27.

[110] Despite the Aramean beliefs which belittle Yahweh—expressed in the speech, "their god is a god of the mountains and so they were stronger than we" (v. 23)—Yahweh does not purpose to reveal to Aram "that I am Yahweh." Yahweh intends only for Israel to recognize him in these battles.

[111] Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 409.

[112] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 55.

[113] For arguments supporting the traditional view (first expressed in Sirach 48:22-25), see Oswald T. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950); Edward J. Young, *Who Wrote Isaiah?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958); R. Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah* (New York: Yeshiva University, 1964); J. Barton Payne, "Eighth Century Background of Isaiah 40-66," *WTJ* 29 (1967): 179-90; *WTJ* 30 (1967): 50-58; Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids:

Though not implausible from the standpoint of conservative chronology, a strong Isaianic influence upon Ezekiel with regard to the recognition formula is most unlikely. A close examination of the evidence must lead the interpreter to deny any substantial dependence upon Isaiah in the use of the refrain. None of Isaiah's formulae appear in oracles of judgment in which the judged "know that I am Yahweh," which is the context of the majority of Ezekiel's formulae (75%). The wording of the refrains in Ezekiel seems far closer to the wording in Exodus than in Isaiah.[114] From a form-critical perspective, the formulae in Isaiah lack the ringing finality of the formulae in Ezekiel; they hardly ever serve as the conclusive target statement of an oracle (49:26 is the sole exception), which is common in Ezekiel. Also, Isaiah's formulae are invariably expanded to a great extent. (There are no strict forms.) At most, Isaiah's prophecy merely encouraged the later[115] prophet Ezekiel to make use of the enigmatic formula. According to a conservative perspective, Isaiah's encouragement may have been *to* use the refrain, not *how* to use it.

It is well worth noting in passing the text in First Isaiah which prophesies that "the Egyptians shall know Yahweh" (19:21). This pregnant knowledge statement—reminiscent

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Eerdmans, 1969) 764-95; Robert I. Vasholz, "Isaiah Versus the Gods: A Case for Unity," *WTJ* 46 (1984): 389-94; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 2 vols., NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 1998); and J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Today, as Raymond Dillard and Tremper Longman point out, critical scholars have a new appreciation for the coherence and unity of the text as it now stands, but they view it as a redactional unity of later date; see Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 274.

[114] Every one of the formulae in Isaiah is expanded, and most are expanded far more than Ezekiel's; e.g., "Then all mankind will know that I, Yahweh, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (Isaiah 49:26; cf. the exact intratext 60:16). Greenberg claims that there is one Ezekiel refrain, 17:24, which is "a greatly expanded recognition formula" (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 317). He includes the whole verse within the formula structure, claiming that 17:24 is "framed by parts of a modestly expanded formula: 'All . . . shall know that I, YHWH, have spoken and have done it' (= have decreed that it be and have brought it about) as in 37:14. This modestly expanded formula has been split, so that 'All . . . shall know that I, YHWH' precedes the recitation of his mighty deeds, while 'I, YHWH, have spoken and have done it' concludes it triumphantly." Greenberg is probably attracted to this conclusion because Ezekiel occasionally merges the recognition formula with the "conclusion formula for divine speech" (*Schlußformel eines Gottesspruchs*): אני יהוה דברתי. The resulting expansion, "you/they shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken," occurs three times (5:13; 17:21; 37:14). While possible, Greenberg's reading of 17:24 is not necessary since there is another completed (unsplit) recognition formula in Ezekiel, which is closely followed by the commonly used "conclusion formula for divine speech"; see 36:36. This conclusion formula in 17:24 can stand on its own and be understood to function similarly to the majority of the occurrences of the formula (5:15, 17; 17:24; 21:17, 32 [MT 21:22, 37]; 22:14; 24:14; 26:14; 30:12; 34:24; 36:36). It echoes the conclusion formula within the recognition formula, without necessarily extending the structure of the recognition formula to the end of the verse.

[115] That is, "later" according to the traditional conservative argument for the unity of Isaiah as composed by Isaiah ben Amoz.

of the recognition formula—ties into an Isaianic oracle which unmistakably harks back to the Exodus narratives about Yahweh's self-revelation (ידע in Niphal), plagues on Egypt, oppression, a savior sent by Yahweh, and the redemptive goal of "serving" (עבד) Yahweh with sacrifices. If this text's "knowledge statement" may be interpreted as a variation on the recognition formula and as being derived from that formula, then Isaiah provides further evidence that the recognition formula is closely associated in the minds of the biblical writers with the Exodus story (cf. Deut. 4:35; 7:9; 29:6 [MT 29:5]; Hosea 2:14-23 [16-25]).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ezekiel's usage of the recognition formula—even his entire prophecy in some measure—is grounded firmly in Exodus. The argument for literary dependence must be a cumulative one, and we have uncovered much evidence, especially in the form of "multiple and sustained lexical linkages,"[116] that the prophet follows a pattern of alluding to an earlier text. In chapter one of this study, there was a list of qualifications to test the legitimacy of literary allusions/echoes (building upon the work of Hays and Schultz), which is re-presented here.

> The reader should look for: (1) credible chronological priority of the source text; (2) availability of an authoritative source to the author; (3) availability of the source to the original audience, if it seems that there is an expectation on the author's part that they will recognize the borrowing and find meaning in the literary relationship; (4) "verbal and syntactical correspondence which goes beyond one key or uncommon term or even a series of commonly-occurring terms, also evaluating whether the expression is simply formulaic or idiomatic" (Schultz). Additional clues for the reader would be: (5) the "volume of an echo," which Hays says "is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns," especially where "the precursor text within Scripture" is "distinctive or prominent"; (6) recurrent use of a smaller text unit which would strengthen the cumulative case that the echoing is both intentional and of importance; (7) evidence of widespread use of a particular literary corpus, such as the Holiness Code, which should alert the reader both to the possibility of finding additional allusions and to the legitimacy of terming it an allusion. Such widespread use could result in a clustering of affinities. An especially strong clue might be (8) "interpretive re-use" of another text (Schultz).

Behind this chapter's work has been a conscientious effort to apply these qualifications. (1) The mountain of research and cogency of argument in the works of

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[116] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 285.

Hurvitz, Rooker, Milgrom and others, though not fully convincing to all, have established that the chronological priority of Pentateuchal materials (including P) over against Ezekiel is at least "credible." (2) If one grants that Exodus (in some authoritative recension) is prior, then one is also ready to believe that the priesthood, as "the custodians of a written torah,"[117] would have access to it. (3) In Ezekiel's reproaches, which assume that the people should (but culpably do not) "remember the days of their youth" in Egypt,[118] and in the people's reported references to their nation's ancient history (Ezek. 33:24), we discover some evidence that the people were familiar with the narratives of Israel's founding. (4) In this chapter there are many examples of a "verbal and syntactical correspondence which goes beyond one key or uncommon term or even a series of commonly-occurring terms" (Schultz), and these parallels are not "simply formulaic or idiomatic." (5) There is a convincing "volume of echo" which legitimizes the claim of literary allusion. (6) As has been noted, Ezekiel's prophecy often moves beyond a single allusion and makes recurrent use of smaller text units.[119] This observation strongly inclines the reader to read the linkages as intentional. (7) This chapter has demonstrated that, along with many apparent allusions to other literary corpora such as the Holiness Code, Ezekiel has widespread and sustained linkages to the book of Exodus. There is a resultant "clustering of affinities." (8) Finally, this chapter has also found cases of "interpretive re-use," which is an especially strong piece of evidence.

Though the issue of the formula's ultimate origin, or initial usage in the literature of the Old Testament, has not been directly faced in this chapter, a massive body of evidence points to Exodus. Why does this language, this formula, suggest itself over and over again to the biblical writers? Why does it suggest itself to such a wide variety of writers—writers of

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[117] Block, "In Search of Theological Meaning," 233.

[118] To "remember" in Ezekiel involves a sense of moral obligation, to reverence and obey the Lord of the covenant who had mercifully rescued the people. The reproach that Israel "did not remember" (16:22, 43) clearly is not intended to speak of ignorance resulting, say, from a failure to learn one's lessons in school. Israel did "remember" Egypt, but in the wrong sense (23:19-21).

[119] These numerous intra-textual linkages may serve as signposts for the reader to recognize cases of what Block has termed "typically Ezekielian resumptive exposition" ("Gog and Magog in Ezekiel's Eschatological Vision," in *The Reader Must Understand*, eds. K. E. Brower and M. W. Elliott [Leicester: Apollos, 1997], 89).

different ages, different backgrounds, from both northern and southern kingdoms? The formula probably finds expression again and again because it is firmly planted in earlier Scriptures of Israel, texts which apparently were "already in the process of being preserved."[120] With this in mind, it is best to avoid all talk of a "pure form" of the refrain, at least in the sense that some critical scholars wish to argue. This student finds no evidence of an original, strict form which was later corrupted or from which other expanded forms developed. As was pointed out in the earlier discussion of Zimmerli's scholarly contributions, the critics' early Pentateuchal source (J) characteristically has the expanded forms of the refrains, while P typically has the "strict form." It does no good to term the terse form "original" and the expanded formulae "later degenerate forms."[121] The conservative interpreter could suggest that both the terse and expanded forms came to life in the midst of Yahweh's self-revelation in the recounted events of the Exodus, and both were recorded, for the blessing of future generations, in the book of Exodus in some "stabilized literary formulation" (Fishbane).

Why would Ezekiel have used Exodus? A quote from Moshe Greenberg—taken slightly out of context—gives a partial answer to this question:

> Idioms, figures and forms of expression and composition familiar to his audience must be reflected in, must indeed have determined, the formulation of a biblical author's creations.[122]

Even more than style or method of communication, Ezekiel and his audience shared a common spiritual heritage which included authoritative Scriptures (with their histories, prophecies, laws, etc.).[123] Led by the Spirit of Yahweh and hearing the word of Yahweh,

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[120] Willey, *Remember the Former Things*, 3.

[121] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 556.

[122] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 18.

[123] Once again one may recall the testimony of Hosea 8:12 regarding a written law. According to Hans Walter Wolff (*Hosea*, Hermeneia, trans. Gary Stansell [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974], 144), "This provides us with evidence for a written tradition of ancient covenant law for the middle of the eighth century. That the law had been put into writing 'increases its authority' (G. Gloege, 'Bibel III,' *RGG*^{3} 1, 1145), especially since it was written by God himself (Ex. 24:12; 34:1)." G. I. Davies says of this text: "The assumption must be that already in Hosea's time laws of a reputedly divine origin had been committed to writing" (*Hosea*, NCBC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 207). Much stronger claims than Wolff's and Davies' are made in U. Cassuto, "The Prophet Hosea and the Books of the Pentateuch," in *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1: Bible, trans. Israel Abrahams, 79-100 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973); Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word, 1987), 136; Dwight R. Daniels, *Hosea and Salvation*

Ezekiel the prophet compellingly re-used or echoed the Scriptures with which the people were familiar. That literature, in part, had fashioned "idioms . . . and forms of expression familiar to his audience." The stories of Exodus belonged to the entire nation of Israel, once redeemed out of Egypt, through all its generations, not only to the priestly class. Ezekiel's use of Scripture was not arcane—an impenetrable show of learning before an ignorant audience. It was a powerful appeal to a generation of exiles, familiar with Scripture. In the succeeding chapter, two further potential reasons for Ezekiel's use of Exodus will be explored: (a) an "analogy of situation," according to which the "alien and homeless"[124] exiles in Babylon could identify with the alien and homeless position of enslaved Israelites long ago; and (b) idolatry which the prophet can trace back to Israel's time in the "house of bondage" in Egypt.

History: The Early Traditions of Israel in the Prophecy of Hosea, BZAW 191 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 113-15; and Thomas Edward McComiskey, "Hosea," in *The Minor Prophets*, vol. 1: Hosea, Joel, Amos, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 132.

[124] This is Moshe Greenberg's contention; see "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," in *Interpreting the Prophets*, eds. James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 217.

CHAPTER 5
THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF EZEKIEL'S ORACLES

This chapter will not deal with the whole historical background of Ezekiel the person and his book, but rather with the narrower questions of the socio-historical and religious situation faced by the Babylonian exiles and how the prophecies containing recognition formulae were addressed to Ezekiel's audience in that context. The target audience of Ezekiel's oracles is the main subject of this chapter. And one is compelled to limit the discussion to the statements addressed to Israel, for the oracles delivered against the nations were presumably never heard by that audience (e.g., the King of Tyre). A more complete survey of the historical setting and of Ezekiel's biography is not necessary for the pursuit of this thesis and its goals. In any case, that information can be easily obtained elsewhere.[1]

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[1] In addition to the standard histories of Israel—such as Noth; Bright; Miller-Hayes; Ahlström; or the new Provan-Long-Longman—one may profitably consult Enno Jannsen, *Juda in der Exilszeit: Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Entstehung des Judentums*, FRLANT 69 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956); Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 823-52; Bustenay Oded, "Judah and the Exile," in *Israelite and Judaean History*, eds. J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, 435-88, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977); Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington, Indiana: Meyer Stone, 1989); James M. Scott, ed., *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions*, JSJSup 51 (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002); Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2003); Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.*, Studies in Biblical Literature 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); and Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Jerusalem under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005). Among the best commentary discussions are Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, pp. 9-21; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, pp. 3-17; and Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, pp. 1-12, 26-30. Help in placing the Jewish experience of exile within the course of Neo-Babylonian history is available in two works: Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods According to Babylonian Sources* (Haifa: University Press, 1979); and David S. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets*, HSM 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999). An excellent general history of the Neo-Babylonian Empire is provided in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 3, pt. 2, *The Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and Other States of the Near East, from the Eighth to the Sixth Centuries BC*, eds., John Boardman, et al., Second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). We await publication of research into the ancient texts, recently come to light, which apparently refer to the sixth century Jewish community in Babylonia: see

In this dissertation it has been assumed, *contra* Auvray and Brownlee,[2] that the Prophet Ezekiel was himself an exile, and he delivered his prophecies in Babylonia. The clear testimony of the book is that Ezekiel ben Buzi was numbered among the exiles of 597[3] who lived "in the land of the Chaldeans by the Kebar river" (בארץ כשדים על־נהר־כבר, 1:3). The prefatory statement in 1:1-3 and the references to "our exile" (גלותנו, 33:21; 40:1) are taken at face value.[4] The issue of Ezekiel's personality has also generated a great

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Laurie Pearce, "Judeans in Babylonia," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, eds. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

[2] P. Auvray, *Ézéchiel*, Second edition (Paris: Cerf, 1957); William H. Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986). There were earlier scholars staking out positions either that the Babylonian provenance of the prophecies was a fiction or that there were two spheres of ministry (Babylon and Jerusalem); most prominent among them were Volkmar Herntrich, *Ezechielprobleme*; Alfred Bertholet, and Kurt Galling, *Hezekiel*; and H. W. Robinson, *Two Hebrew Prophets: Studies in Hosea and Ezekiel* (London: Lutterworth, 1948). Notable among recent works is Pohlmann's commentary, which rejects the Babylonian provenance of the original oracles and contends that the portrayed setting in the Diaspora is due to thoroughgoing and repeated redaction, especially a major "golaorientierten Redaktion." (Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel), Kapitel 1–19*, pp. 27-39.) Most recent, and issuing from a hermeneutic of suspicion, is Robert P. Carroll's suggested rereading of Ezekiel "as a series of textual representations of Jerusalem life in terms analogous to living in the diaspora" ("Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature," in Scott, ed., *Exile*, 81). Among the better, more up-to-date defenses of a Babylonian locale is Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel*, VTSup 76 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 27-38.

[3] Following Parker-Dubberstein, Greenberg places the exiling of Jehoiachin *circa* Nisan 597 (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 9). This now seems to be widely considered an "absolute date." See Abraham Malamat, "The Twilight of Judah in the Egyptian-Babylonian Maelstrom," in *Congress Volume: Edinburgh 1974*, pp. 123-45, VTSup 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, New Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1983); and Mordecai (*sic*) Cogan, "Chronology (Hebrew Bible)," *ABD*, vol. 1:1002-1011. The fullest study of chronology in Ezekiel is likely Ernst Kutsch, *Die chronologischen Daten des Ezechielbuches*, OBO 62 (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), who takes the discussion far beyond that of earlier studies such as K. S. Freedy and D. B. Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian and Egyptian Sources," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 462-85. Unlike many other recent scholars, Kutsch maintains a date of 587 for the fall of Jerusalem.

[4] Those in biblical studies who are usually called "minimalist" historians—without polemic—have called into question the existence of a pre-exilic Israel in any form similar to the biblical picture. Debate over this query continues to grow, and lengthy responses are seeing publication (e.g., John Day, ed., *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, JSOTSup 406 [London: T&T Clark, 2004]). Now, even beyond that, some minimalists are expressing skepticism that "the exile" was a historical event—in the sense of largely interrupting Jewish society in the land—or that it was much more than an ideological/theological construct. See Robert P. Carroll, "The Myth of the Empty Land," *Semeia* 59 (1992): 79-93; Hans M. Barstad, *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archeology of Judah during the "Exilic" Period* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1996); and Israel Finkelstein and Neil A. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed* (New York: The Free Press, 2001). Answering the skeptics are the likes of David Vanderhooft (*The Neo-Babylonian Empire*); Ephraim Stern ("The Babylonian Gap," *Biblical Archeology Review* 26.6 [2000]: 45-51); William G. Dever (*What Did the Biblical Writers Know, and When Did They Know It? What Archeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001]); and Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager (*Life in Biblical Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 256-58). The aforementioned Stern article builds upon the deepest scholarship in the field of archeology and summarizes the conclusions which would

deal of work, especially in the twentieth century. Though he was a visionary and he related very strange messages from Yahweh, Ezekiel is understood in this dissertation as being completely sane. Older theories that he suffered from some psycho-pathology are largely disregarded today.[5] There are now other, sounder explanations for the bizarre and "extreme" behaviors exhibited by the prophet. All students of Ezekiel who have difficulty grappling with these phenomena, with the rhetoric in the prophecy, and with the emotional tensions present in the prophecy would do well to consider a point made by Matties:

> Most North American readers of Ezekiel cannot enter the agony of Ezekiel's own moment in history. The terror of losing all the foundations and structures for social identity and religious vision is scarcely comprehensible. In the context of the historical crisis of the sixth century B.C.E., Ezekiel's language reaches to the extremes in search of explanation and possibility.[6]

More to the point in this chapter is noting the fact that Ezekiel's audience, the Jewish community in Babylonian exile, shared the prophet's "agony" of deportation. Both the one prophesying and his audience had suffered great loss and trauma. If "Ezekiel's language reaches to the extremes," the prophet's peculiarities are better explained by studying the context in which he speaks than by speculations about his mental health.

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appear in Stern, *Archeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 2001). A volume offering lengthy scholarly discussion of the controversy is Lester L. Grabbe, ed., *Leading Captivity Captive: The Exile as History and Ideology*, JSOTSup 278 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

[5] The most cited among the older studies is Edwin C. Broome, Jr., "Ezekiel's Abnormal Personality," *JBL* 65 (1946): 277-92, which concluded that the prophet was psychotic and suffered from a whole complex of different pathologies. Also influential was Karl Jaspers' work, "Der Prophet Ezechiel: Eine pathographische Studie," in *Aneignung und Polemik: Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, 13-21 (München: Piper, 1968). The recent work of David Halperin—which also pursues a Freudian analysis—comes to similar conclusions, but few Ezekiel scholars show any inclination to follow Halperin in *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). This student does not reject out of hand the possibility that God's servants the prophets could suffer from psychological disorders. For example, the "lament" of Jeremiah in 20:14-18 (see Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 1999], 865) and the narrative of Elijah's flight from Jezebel to Mt. Horeb in 1 Kings 19 reveal prophets with clear signs of depression. (Further, see Paul A. Kruger, "Depression in the Hebrew Bible: An Update," *JNES* 64.3 [2005]: 187-92.) But the diagnoses of Ezekiel by moderns such as Broome and Halperin do not appear sound or heuristically useful.

[6] Gordon H. Matties, *Ezekiel 18 and the Rhetoric of Moral Discourse*, SBLDS 126 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 219. Additionally, Daniel L. Smith-Christopher reminds us that "Ezekiel's rhetoric is the language of suffering—and the rhetoric of suffering and anger is not 'normal.'" ("Ezekiel in Abu Ghraib: Rereading Ezekiel 16:37-39 in the Context of Imperial Conquest," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, eds. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton, SBLSymS 31 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004], 149.)

A. Difficulties Faced in Studying Ezekiel's Prophecy to Understand the Socio-Historical and Religious Context

1. Little Direct Information About Life In Exile

There are at least three difficulties facing the modern interpreter of Ezekiel attempting to understand the socio-historical context. First of all, one has to admit the force of A. B. Davidson's argument that the picture Ezekiel gives of the life of the exiles and their circumstances is inadequate to derive definite *Sitze im Leben* for the oracles.[7] Ezekiel does on occasion quote a saying that is current among the exiles, but the prophet is so focused on the divine side of the dialogue[8] that the reader may be left with the sense that one has "little to go on," that is, there is little to provide a clear picture of the social context. About the best that can be hoped for is "to present a picture that can claim more probability than any alternative proposal."[9] Davidson is among the scholars inclined to turn to Jeremiah's prophecy, with its candid picture of the people's idolatry and of their penchant for false prophets, in order to gain a better understanding of Ezekiel's situation. The lack of much socio-historical information in the book of Ezekiel itself is the first handicap facing the interpreter.[10]

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[7] A. B. Davidson, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, xxi.

[8] Both Zimmerli and Greenberg have emphasized this point. The latter writes (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 77), "His inner parts suffused with the scroll . . . the prophet must henceforth speak 'in God's words.' This is a far-reaching limitation of the prophet's spontaneity and responsibility. Zimmerli noted, with respect to 14:1-11, that 'the individuality of Ezekiel's prophetic style is recognizable by the fact that the sin of the audience is not set forth as, say, by Amos (4:1f., cf. 5:1-3), in a reproving discourse formulated by the prophet himself, but is wholly included in the divine address [to the prophet]' (*ZAW* 66 [1954], 6). Such, indeed, is the case throughout the book: Ezekiel's denunciations are exclusively reports of what God said. The prophet's task is reduced to the conveyance of God's message; he has no further responsibility toward his audience and is answerable only to God for delivering his message and thus establishing a record that 'a prophet had been among them.'"

[9] Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 43.

[10] However, as will be argued later in this chapter, there is more socio-historical information to be found in Ezekiel than first appears. It is interesting how the relative lack of information for constructing the oracles' *Sitze im Leben* makes traditional form criticism difficult to practice in Ezekiel studies. Tying the speech forms to their original oral settings proves to be quite a challenge. For a critique of Zimmerli's modified form-critical method and its aptness as a tool for work on Ezekiel, see Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 15ff.

2. The Credibility Of The Prophet's Picture Of Jewish Religious Life Both In Babylon And In Jerusalem

A second difficulty is the suggestion of critical scholars that what meager background data is available from reading Ezekiel's scroll may not be historically credible. Today, a number of critical scholars argue that the modern reader does not have simple and direct access to "the world of Ezekiel" through the prophet's denunciations of civil and cultic sins. Michael Fishbane, for example, warns against an attempt to "read prophetic critiques as a window to popular practices."[11] This warning is necessary, these scholars believe, because of the prophet's hortatory purposes. Particularly, the lengthy lists of charges against God's people, in such chapters as 8–11, 18, and 22, serve a rhetorical function. Fishbane says that the sins cataloged "are more in the nature of typical lists of behaviors deriving from a common literary pattern than 'historically accurate' indices of exactly what was or was not done in Ezekiel's day."[12]

This somewhat skeptical stance can be answered with three arguments. First, Fishbane has disputed Ezekiel's ancient witness without presenting any substantial evidence upon which to base his counter-claim. The fact that recognizable literary patterns are present does not require the conclusion that the indictments were, in large part, mere inventions or were somehow falsified, as though the prophet had preferred charges against the people of God without a solid basis in fact.[13] Such a conclusion seems not only rather uncompelling but also wrong-headed when we consider that Ezekiel's indictments are not out of accord with Jeremiah's.[14] Secondly, it requires some temerity, assuming our relative ignorance of the socio-historical context, to second-guess and even contradict a preacher's more specific

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[11] Michael Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel," *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 147.

[12] Ibid., 146.

[13] For a discussion of the literary character of historical reports and the frequently conceived wide gap between literature and history, see V. Philips Long, *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

[14] According to Jeremiah's oracles, the spiritual condition of Judah was terribly grave in Ezekiel's day. Jeremiah's prophecy (e.g., 44:15-19) points to a religious situation post-597 and even post-586 where the "remaining population [in Judah] . . . interpreted the exile as punishment for Josiah's anti-syncretistic actions," and there are clear indications of a "resurgence of syncretistic practices" (Smith, *The Religion of the Landless*, 33). Jeremiah's list of religious, moral, and social evils closely mirrors that of Ezekiel.

indictments 2500 years after they were delivered. A third argument would point out that, if Ezekiel the preacher were slightly off-base in his denunciation, his audience would readily discount his entire message. A prophet's stock-in-trade was his scrupulous honesty and adherence to the facts of the situation, as he would perceive them. If the audience did not share the prophet's perception and evaluation of the situation, the accuser was compelled to make his case. A preacher's unjustifiable exaggeration or severity would plainly lose him his audience. Without a credible message the Prophet Ezekiel would have gained no hearing. There probably were certain literary patterns to the vice-catalogs, but the interpreter may create more problems than are solved when it is proposed that a catalog may serve as "a propaganda document whose chief concern was to justify the inevitability of the divine doom to the exiles."[15] This dissertation argues for the general accuracy of Ezekiel's sermons in the particulars they describe and in their interpretation of the particulars.

While the accuracy of Ezekiel's oracles is accepted and defended, the student must make two important qualifications for the sake of stricter accuracy. First, in reading Ezekiel's prophecy, one must accept that there can be ambiguity in places regarding the target of Yahweh's indictment. Many charges are leveled specifically at Jerusalem and those who remained behind after the exile of 597, while other charges seem to apply more generally to "all the house of Israel" (3:7),[16] that is, both the exilic community and the residents of Jerusalem/Judah. Second, it seems best to interpret the stinging indictments as having a trans-generational application.

When the prophet censures God's people for their wicked actions and heart-attitudes, he not infrequently mentions "the fathers" or ancestors as also carrying a weight of guilt. Punishment is coming upon Israel because the people "*and their fathers* have rebelled against me to this very day" (ואבותם פשעו בי עד־עצם היום הזה, 2:3). In 20:4 the prophet is to speak to the nation of Israel and "make them know (הודיעם) the abominations of their fathers." There is reason, then, to read the catalog of sins as both an indictment of the generation living in Ezekiel's day and as a redemptive-historical record of

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[15] Ibid., 135.

[16] The ambiguity appears as a greater challenge when one notices that even the phrase, "all the house of Israel," can refer more narrowly to the Jerusalemites (12:10) or more narrowly to the Jews in exile (11:15).

the evils committed by previous generations. A few specific sins may have been more characteristic of earlier generations, for example, those living during the long reign of Manasseh; it is impossible to judge for certain. We are unable to distinguish strictly between specific sins as historical or contemporary. From the theological standpoint, this inability is not necessarily a serious problem in the interpretation of the prophecy, for Ezekiel argues that there is a wretched spiritual inheritance that his generation owns (20:30-31). Even in the exile the nation's tradition of profaning God's name continues (36:16-23), and Ezekiel views the current generation as sharing fully in the wickedness of those who had gone before. There is a spiritual solidarity with the ancestors.[17]

Does this reading of Ezekiel's theology conflict with the teaching of chapter 18 on the topic of individual responsibility? It does not conflict, if we take into consideration how Ezekiel in certain places implies that guilt—perhaps in the sense of condoning evil—and deserved punishment are incurred where later generations do not mourn the sins of the previous generations.[18] In order to receive the plans for Yahweh's glorious new sanctuary, the regathered people of God are required in 43:9-11 to put away their whoring and the dead idols (פִּגְרֵי) of kings long ago. And they are also required to feel ashamed of all that they have done. If and when they mourn, the temple plans will be made known (הוֹדַע) to them.[19] Such mourning and feelings of shame in repentance—even for ancestors' crimes

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[17] The relation of the generations, their solidarity, is a fundamental issue in Ezekiel's theology. J. G. McConville has made the point that within broader Old Testament theology this "solidarity . . . is two-edged." On the one hand, that solidarity is the basis for claiming the covenant promises of blessing upon later generations in the community of faith. "On the other hand, it means that the people of the present have a share in the *guilt* of the past." *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, Daily Study Bible, Old Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 125 [emphasis his].

[18] It seems that scholarship needs to devote more work to understanding the place and importance of corporate confession of sin in the Old Testament. For example, when Daniel reports that he has read Jeremiah's prophecy and understood that the exile would last seventy years—and was coming to an end—he does not rejoice (Dan. 9:3). Rather, he mourns and with deepest feeling confesses the sin of his "fathers" as his very own (9:8, 16; cf. Neh. 1:6ff.; 9:16ff., 34; Jer. 3:25). Within the Old Testament canonical context, how is such mourning related to the expected fulfillment of the promise of return and the prophecy of the nation's restoration?

[19] Scholars are divided on two points: the meaning of the word, "dead bodies/idols" (פִּגְרֵי) in 43:9 (cf. v. 7), and how to render the Hebrew syntax in 43:11. On the first controversy, Zimmerli understands the word to refer to memorials for kings, while Block suggests that it points to "some aspect of a cult of the dead," perhaps "funerary offerings," and involving "the veneration of the deified spirits of Israel's royal ancestors" (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, pp. 584, 575, 585). Regarding the second controversy on verse 11 and what Cooke terms "the confused text of this v." (*The Book of Ezekiel*, 465), some do not understand the divulging of the temple plans as conditional upon the people being ashamed (as in MT, RSV, REB, NIV, NJB, ESV). The NJPS and NRSV render the conditional (וְאִם) as "when" instead. The

and sins—could be concomitant with, and even constitute, a cleansing from defilement and a release from guilt. Is this the best way to interpret Ezekiel 9:4ff., where we read that those who "mourn and groan (הַנֶּאֱנָחִים וְהַנֶּאֱנָקִים) over all the abominations" done in the city are spared death at the hands of the executioners? But defilement, uncleanness, and profanation would remain and even carry over to another day, in a priestly conception of things, where no cleansing (through a proper mourning of evil) had taken place. It may be suggested that those who failed to mourn would also presumably tolerate and even participate in similar sins.[20] It is certainly remarkable how Ezekiel's prophecy associates feelings of shame with the proclamation of salvation (16:54, 61; 36:32), rather than with judgment.[21]

3. Biblical Scholarship On The Trauma Of Deportation

There is currently a third difficulty in understanding the socio-historical and religious context of Ezekiel's prophecies. Biblical scholarship researching the emotional, psychological and social stresses experienced by the Jews deported to Babylonia has not yet fully matured. Though much careful and valuable work has been done to assess the historical and cultural environment of the exilic community,[22] there have been few forays

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two most influential commentaries challenging the conditional in the text are Zimmerli (*Ezekiel 2*, p. 410) and Block (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, p. 586ff.). Eichrodt simply deletes the entire conditional clause an inappropriate insertion (*Ezekiel*, 553). One could wish that Greenberg's third volume were already available to consult on the MT.

[20] Alexander Pope wrote the following impressive lines in *An Essay on Man. Epistle II*, line 217:

> Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As to be hated needs but to be seen;
> Yet seen to oft, familiar with her face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

[21] Zimmerli makes this point in *Ezekiel 2*, pp. 418-19. For two more recent studies touching this subject, see Margaret S. Odell, "The Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16.59-63," *JSOT* 56 (1992): 101-12; and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Shame and Self-Knowledge: The Positive Role of Shame in Ezekiel's View of the Moral Self," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, eds., Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, 143-73. Cf. Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 346 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

[22] In addition to the works cited in the first footnote of this chapter, see E. F. Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda, in Babylonischen Keilschrifttexten," in *Mélanges Syriens Offerts à Monsieur René Dussaud*, vol. 2, pp. 923-35 (Paris: Paul Geunther, 1939); J. M. Wilkie, "Nabonidus and the Later Jewish Exiles," *JTS* 2 (1951): 36-44; C. F. Whitley, *The Exilic Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957); William F. Albright, "King Jehoiachin in Exile," *Biblical Archeologist* 5.4 (1942): 49-55 (= *Biblical Archeology Reader*, vol. 1, pp. 106-12 [1961]); B. Porten, "Exile, Babylonian," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 6, pp.

into the kind of sociological and psychological analysis which is common in psychiatry and contemporary refugee and disaster studies. More interdisciplinary work is needed to analyze the exiles' previous trauma (597) and its possible effect upon their state of being years later when Ezekiel received his call (593) and began to prophesy another trauma, the future devastation of Jerusalem. Students of Ezekiel should come to appreciate the crisis of the exile as "a dislocation which was not only physical but psychological and theological too,"[23] and how that crisis setting may have shaped Israel's exilic literature. Two book-length studies breaking new ground for biblical scholarship in the field of sociological and psychological analysis have been published by Daniel Smith-Christopher,[24] and a growing number of scholars will certainly work in this same field in coming years.

Smith-Christopher approaches the literature of the exile with a view to exposing the "sociology of oppression"[25] which was an important force in shaping that literature. In order to probe the background, rhetorical conventions, and "exilic theology" of the literature, he utilizes a complex sociological theory which includes a component of psychology (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder). He researches the coping mechanisms (or survival strategies) of the dispossessed, oppressed and vulnerable. Beyond that, Smith-Christopher urges Bible readers to see the subversive element in the text, i.e., a subtle resistance to a socio-political oppressor.[26] Smith-Christopher's approach, building upon a

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1036-41 (1971); D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Bustenay Oded, "Observations on the Israelite/Judean Exiles in Mesopotamia During the Eighth–Sixth Centuries BCE," in *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East, Festschrift E. Lipinski*, eds., K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors, pp. 205-12, Orientalia Lovaniensa Analecta 65 (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), the last of these helpfully cited in Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 32.

[23] Paul M. Joyce, "Dislocation and Adaptation in the Exilic Age and After," in *After the Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason*, eds., John Barton and David J. Reimer (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996), 45.

[24] See his 1989 work, *The Religion of the Landless*, and the most recent publication, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, from 2002. The latter book develops Smith-Christopher's arguments set forth in two earlier articles: "Reassessing the Historical and Sociological Impact of the Babylonian Exile (597/587-539 BCE)," in Scott, ed., *Exile*; and "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch," in *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace* (Millard Lind Festschrift) eds., T. Grimsrud and L. Johns, pp. 108-44 (Telford, Pennsylvania: Pandora, 1999). We also note in passing here the more popular study of David Aberbach, "Trauma and Abstract Monotheism: Jewish Exile and Recovery in the Sixth Century B.C.E.," *Judaism* 50 (2001): 211-21.

[25] Walter Brueggemann, "Editor's Foreword," in Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, viii.

[26] This element is present in Ezekiel as the Babylonian Empire is denied any bragging rights in conquering Judah; it is Yahweh who sent his people into exile.

number of case-studies of typical human emotional and behavioral responses to trauma and displacement, holds real promise, especially as it moves beyond a concern with victimization to consider the positive side and renewal possibilities inherent in experiences of suffering and loss.[27] What will be built in the place of what was destroyed? It is wise to follow Smith-Christopher's lead in asking questions about possible PTSD among deportees, the exilic community's adjustments in leadership structures, the role of ritual in establishing and maintaining group identity, and the impulse to create an affirming "in-house" literature. There is need, however, to balance Smith-Christopher's frequent focus upon Ezekiel as a human response to tragedy and as a human word about God with a focus upon Ezekiel—a profoundly theocentric prophecy—as God's word to human beings and as a revelation of the divine purposes in, and the divine response to, human suffering. We will now treat this subject of properly hearing the voice of suffering in Ezekiel's prophecy (as God's word) and attempt to glean some insights into the socio-historical context in which Ezekiel delivered his oracles.

B. The Value of Ezekiel's Prophecy As a Window on the Socio-Historical and Religious Context

In recent years scholarship has paid increasing attention to Ezekiel's prophecy as a source of information about the Jewish experience of exile in Babylon and has utilized various newer sociological models to understand the *Sitze im Leben*, rhetoric, and theological message of Ezekiel oracles.[28] This section of the dissertation will draw from the prophecy in a "maximalist" fashion to assess several problems of interpretation: (1) the

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[27] Smith-Christopher is in full agreement with Walter Brueggemann, whom he quotes: "exile evoked the most brilliant literature and the most daring theological articulation in the Old Testament." (*Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997], 2; cited in *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 13.)

[28] From a single year, 1999, come the following studies: Meindert Dijkstra, "The Valley of Dry Bones: Coping with the Reality of Exile in the Book of Ezekiel," in *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times*, eds., Bob Becking and M. C. A. Korpel, pp. 127-32, OtSt 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Johan Lust, "Exile and Diaspora: Gathering from Dispersion in Ezekiel," in *Lectures et Relectures de la Bible (Festschrift P.-A. Bogaert)*, eds. J.-M. Auwers and A. Wénin, 99-122 (Louvain: Peeters, 1999); Marietjie Odendaal, "Exile in Ezekiel: Evaluating a Sociological Model," *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* 40 (1999): 133-39; and Daniel Smith-Christopher, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch" (previously cited);

prophet's situation and personal difficulties in fulfilling his divine calling; (2) the Babylonian exiles' traumatic experiences; (3) the theological questions which, we surmise, may have occupied the community in reflecting upon their lost home and new situation; and (4) Ezekiel's portrayal of Israel's spiritual and moral state and the sins which called forth Yahweh's indictment.

1. Ezekiel's Personal Hardships In Fulfilling His Prophetic Calling

A commonplace in Ezekiel studies decades ago was discussion of the prophet's psychological and emotional makeup. Some have attempted to explain the peculiarities of Ezekiel's sign-acts and the severity of the prophecy's judgments by recourse to categories of psychological pathology. In the past few years, however, those among Ezekiel's critics who attempt to psychoanalyze the prophet have themselves been charged with "blaming the victim." Too often psychological studies have shown scant interest in understanding Ezekiel's personal hardships both as a deportee[29] and as one carrying a heavy prophetic burden. The first of these concerns, the traumas of deportation and living in exile which Ezekiel experienced together with the whole Jewish community in Babylon, will be treated following a discussion of Ezekiel's personal hardships as Yahweh's prophetic spokesperson.

Among the Old Testament prophets, perhaps none but Jeremiah suffered as much travail in his spirit as Ezekiel. Though the son of Buzi may not have faced literal chains—but see הַרְתֹּק in 7:23—and did not see imprisonment in a dungeon or the extremity of a martyr's death, his suffering in ministry was great. Captured by the Babylonian army in 597, Ezekiel was a few years later a captive to Yahweh's call. He was strictly warned not to resist his prophetic commission when he was overwhelmed (מְשֹׁמֵם, 3:15) by the initial vision of God. In the first three chapters Ezekiel's own response to seeing the glory of

[29] According to Smith-Christopher (*A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 89), "Halperin [*Seeking Ezekiel*] mentions the exile two times in his entire book, and then only in passing. Such tendencies to read the psychological state of Ezekiel totally apart from the social and political experiences he suffered are symptoms of the same avoidance in other biblical scholarly analyses of the exile as a real event where human beings deeply suffered. Any psychological assumptions about Ezekiel derived apart from serious attention to the exile are thus tantamount to *blaming the victim.*" (Emphasis added)

Yahweh was to fall on his face in awe (1:28) and finally sit "stunned and withdrawn"[30] for a period of seven days (3:15). Throughout the book, Ezekiel communicates the irresistibility of the divine calling upon him. When, for example, the hand of the Lord Yahweh seizes him by the hair of his head to carry him away to Jerusalem (8:1-3), Ezekiel's own volition is of no consequence. He cannot but submit.

The warnings given to Ezekiel early in the book indicate that the Jews in Babylonia could be expected to oppose the prophet's message and even possibly to pose a physical danger to the messenger. This is a plausible interpretation of the reiterated exhortation to Ezekiel not to fear, though he may live beside the "briers," "thorns," or may "sit upon scorpions" (2:6); these metaphors clearly forewarn the prophet that his compatriots will cause him pain. Ezekiel can expect, at the very least, menacing words and looks (2:6). The hostility of the audience and their refusal to listen (2:5, 7; 3:7, 11, 27; etc.) is a gauge of their spiritual condition.[31] Judging from the focus of Ezekiel's judgment-speeches and the focus of the sign acts,[32] the people were likely to have been especially resistant to the prophecy that Jerusalem faced certain destruction.

Warnings given to Ezekiel of strong opposition within the exilic community prompt the interpreter to query whether the prophet experienced an alienation from Jewish society in Babylon. Considering the fact that Ezekiel was forced to live as an alien, we imagine that his family was dependent upon fellow Jews for social interaction and friendship, business and

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[30] Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, p. 44.

[31] For Ezekiel personally there may have been a positive side to Yahweh's warning about the exiles' stubborn refusal to hear the prophetic messenger. Renz writes that "the prophet is delivered from the responsibility of having to persuade his audience. His responsibility lies only in the delivery of the warning, not in its being heeded." (*The Rhetorical Function*, 39). Even more important is the rhetorical point which Renz drives home (39): "By contrasting Ezekiel's positive, more specifically submissive, response to Yahweh's word, with the anticipated negative response of the community at large, the first three chapters also allow for a discontinuity between the prophet's audience and the book's audience. The audience of the book is expected to react to the book in the same way as Ezekiel reacted to the scroll given to him, and not to respond as the people did to the prophet."

[32] All of the sign-acts, excepting the last (37:15ff.), are meant to communicate the irrevocability of Yahweh's judgment upon Jerusalem. This is true even for the sign-act of dumbness, according to Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III (*An Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 322). "At the very least, Ezekiel's dumbness conveyed the idea that he would not be interceding with God in the nation's behalf. God's decree that Jerusalem be destroyed was now irrevocable, and intercession was pointless. The only words from the prophet's mouth would be announcements of impending doom until that divine decree had come to pass." Much the same conclusion was earlier drawn by Robert R. Wilson, "An Interpretation of Ezekiel's Dumbness," *VT* 22 (1972): 91-104.

trade, assistance and counsel in times of personal need, spiritual fellowship, etc. Any social alienation would have been of great consequence in Ezekiel's life.[33] Clearly, the prophet was never completely ostracized, for the Jewish elders repeatedly sought him out and he seems eventually to have found some public recognition and even popularity (33:30-33). Still yet, his unsparingly harsh denunciations of the Jewish nation, his notoriety for bizarre sign-acts, and his sometimes curt rejection of visitors, required by Yahweh (14:1-3; 20:1ff.), must have brought painful strains in his relationships with fellow exiles.

The opening chapters give many more indications that Ezekiel's ministry would be hard. They speak of the prophetic burden of woe oracles (2:10) which gave him a bitter and burning feeling in his spirit (ואלך מר בחמת רוחי, 3:14); a commission as watchman (צפה) with terrifying responsibility for souls (3:17ff.); divinely appointed experiences of seclusion, being bound with cords, and dumbness (3:24-26). There are still more assignments to lie bound on his side for lengthy periods to bear Israel's and Judah's punishment (4:4-8),[34] to eat siege-rations cooked over dung (4:9-17), and to perform the freakish act of cutting off his hair and beard (5:1-4) with a sword.

Furthermore, Yahweh exposed the priest-prophet to horrifying idol worship in the Temple (8:1-16) and the trauma of witnessing widespread slaughter in the city streets (9:1-11). The latter so distressed the man of God that he fell on his face and cried out "Oh Lord Yahweh! Will you destroy the whole remnant of Israel in your outpoured wrath on Jerusalem?" This is not the unfeeling, hard man many take Ezekiel to be. The prophet's distress was heightened as Yahweh ordered him to condemn those in the city who give evil counsel, Pelatiah among them; Ezekiel watched Pelatiah die even as he, Ezekiel, prophesied (11:1-13). Again, he could not contain his raw emotions: "Oh Lord Yahweh! Will you wipe out the whole remnant of Israel?" There was tragedy in the vivid, unforgettable display of the power of Yahweh's word in judgment, even if Ezekiel understood the judgment as just. Ezekiel may have viewed himself as an agent of Yahweh's death-dealing

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[33] It is worth remarking at this point that the typical modern Westerner, living in a culture where "rugged individualism" is commonly thought a virtue and a mark of personal strength, might not struggle with social alienation to the degree that an ancient Jew would.

[34] Henry McKeating suggests reading this text with Exodus 32:30-34, where Moses seeks to get an atonement for the nation's sin. See *Ezekiel*, Old Testament Guides (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 95.

word, and it stands to reason that the prophet is able to name the dead man, Pelatiah, because he knew him, or knew of him, as a fellow Jerusalemite.

Ezekiel's public sign-acts brought uncomfortable questions and caused consternation in his audience (12:9). One imagines that Ezekiel fought against discouragement as he heard fellow exiles dismiss all prophecies as "coming to nothing" (12:22) or as addressing distant days with no relevance for the present (12:26). Ezekiel saw his oracles contradicted by false prophets (chapter 13) and opposed by an audience of "people who listen to lies" (13:19). Yet another burden was the duty of fulfilling Yahweh's commission and offending the sensibilities of fellow exiles by delivering the lengthy and vulgar allegories of chapters 16 and 23. (We can imagine that contemporary readers' disgust at these allegories was matched by disgust among many of Ezekiel's hearers.) Having his prophecies dismissed as strange parables (מָשָׁל יָם, 20:49 [21:5]), presumably not worth the effort to try to understand, seems to have caused Ezekiel distress: the reader notes that his exclamation in responding to the disrespect, "Ah, Lord Yahweh!" (אֲהָהּ אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה), appears in other Ezekiel texts where the prophet is experiencing a kind of anguish (cf. 4:14; 9:8; 11:13).

Yet all the inconvenience, reproach, and distress previously mentioned cannot compare with Ezekiel's personal loss in chapter 24, where his young wife[35] is taken away in sudden death. The delight of his eyes, the only person on earth perhaps who understood him, who understood his burdensome calling, is dead, and Ezekiel is bereft of all human comfort. The prophet had been commanded in the morning to prophesy her impending death (24:15-18); what faith and strength of will must this have required! And he is not even allowed the healing experience of mourning, as Yahweh makes the bereavement another strange sign-act. There are to be no tears, no words of lament, no outward signs of grief "by which a mourner . . . implicitly solicited the condolences of his community."[36] A long list of usual mourning activities are proscribed by Yahweh in the text. These events in chapter 24 are the

[35] In ancient Israelite marriage, "it is safe to assume the bride was considerably younger than the groom." Philip J. King, and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 54. If, as is widely thought, Ezekiel was 30 years old at the time of his commissioning in 593 and approximately age 35 at the time of the events in chapter 24, Ezekiel's wife could very well have been only in her twenties when she was taken away.

[36] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 508.

worst of all of Ezekiel's sufferings in the book. It may be true that Ezekiel "exhibits none of Jeremiah's agitated suffering,"[37] but suffer he did! In conclusion, one "cannot but be impressed with the power and intensity of the prophet's experience,"[38] and all of Ezekiel's various torments and troubles deserve consideration as one interprets the prophet's ministry and message.

2. ASSESSING THE TRAUMA OF THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

> Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say "death";
> For exile hath more terror in his look,
> Much more than death. Do not say "banishment"!
> . . . "Banished"?
> O friar, the damned use that word in hell;
> Howling attends it.
>
> – (Romeo) Shakespeare[39]

In the preceding reflections upon Ezekiel's adversities, little has been said regarding the twin traumas of forced deportation and surviving—hardly *living*—in exile. Simply put, the exile was the daily grief and hardship of Ezekiel, on top of which all the troubles of ministry were added. The Jews in Babylon, who composed Ezekiel's audience, were likewise survivors of these traumas, and we must imagine that their experiences and circumstances strongly influenced their reactions to Ezekiel's oracles. Both prophet and audience were victimized by an ancient practice of "state-sponsored terrorism,"[40] which was calculated to

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[37] Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, trans. David E. Green (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1978), 207.

[38] Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 319.

[39] *Romeo and Juliet*, III.iii.12-14, 46-48, from William Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

[40] This categorization is suggested by Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 76. From a Stuart W. Turner and Caroline Gorst-Unsworth article which Smith-Christopher quotes ("Psychological Sequelae of Torture: A Descriptive Model," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 157 [1990]: 475-76), the phrase, "state-sponsored terrorism" may be defined as: ". . . essentially the act of a state against an individual or group, with the aim of achieving specific psychological changes (directly) in their victims and often (indirectly) in their communities . . . the survivor of torture has not merely been the accidental victim of physical injury or threat of death such as might occur, for example in a natural disaster or accident. . . . He or she has received the focused attention of an adversary determined to cause the maximal psychological change. . . . Neither is it the individual who suffers. For every person tortured there are mothers and fathers, wives, husbands and children, friends and relatives who wait in uncertainty and fear. . . . Torture has effects on communities and on whole societies."

change the Jews' psychology and destroy their will to independence. Babylon intended to humiliate, intimidate, and demoralize all political and military resistance, and many suffered in the process. Taking this traumatic context into account gives the interpreter a better vantage point for understanding Ezekiel's oracles and their effects. The writer Theodor Adorno has posited, "The need to let suffering speak is the condition of all truth."[41] Here we seek to let suffering speak, both in the sense of listening to the sufferer and of learning from the suffering.

a. Specific Traumas and Hardships Likely Experienced by the Exiles

In many places the book of Ezekiel evokes memories of the past sufferings of Jewish prisoners in the 597 exile by announcing a far more severe judgment which was certain to fall later upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (It is important to remark at the outset of this discussion that, apart from two passing references in 17:12-14 and 19:8-9 to Jehoiachin's capture, Ezekiel does not directly discuss the trauma of 597.) For example, when Ezekiel details Nebuchadnezzar's future siege-works raised against Jerusalem and the horrors to occur inside the city walls, the prophet was speaking to those who had experienced that terror first-hand, at least in some measure (2 Kings 24:10-16). The exiles of 597 had probably seen siege walls and ramps being built, and encampments of enemy soldiers, and battering rams brought near the city walls (4:1-3). According to the biblical portrayal of events in 2 Kings 24, Jehoiachin capitulated and went out of the city to Nebuchadnezzar, thus sparing the city the horrors of a prolonged siege.[42] The full horror of that type of warfare was to be experienced, Ezekiel prophesies, by the Jews who remained behind in Judah post-597. It would soon come upon the exiles' friends and relatives in Jerusalem (17:17; 21:22 [27]), and this prospect in all likelihood further traumatized the Jews in Babylonia.

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[41] Quoted without citation of source in Tod Linafelt, *Surviving Lamentations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1. One of two works is the likely source: *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1973); or *Prisms*, trans. S. Weber (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 1981).

[42] See the recent work by Paul Bentley Kern, *Ancient Siege Warfare* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), cited by Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 51. See also T. R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989).

Ezekiel's vivid oracles about Jerusalem confronted the exilic community with the certainty of a divine judgment that staggered both thought and imagination. Yahweh promises to "break the staff of bread" (שֶׁבֶר מַטֵּה־לֶחֶם, 4:16), so that the inhabitants must ration the dwindling supply of food and water. The population of Jerusalem will eat less palatable foods (4:9), which have been prepared in a shameful, sickening manner (4:12-13). They will eat "in dread" (בִּדְאָגָה), and be "appalled" (שָׁמַם) as they watch their loved ones suffer deprivation and become emaciated (4:16-17). Cannibalism will break out among the starved, even within the immediate family (5:10). In addition to what the oracles term the "arrows of deadly famine" (5:16; cf. Deut. 32:23ff.), the Jerusalemites will experience death by wild beasts, plague, and finally bloodshed as the walls are breached and swordsmen enter the city (5:17). Though the deportees of 597 never faced the full horrors of a prolonged siege, they had faced the prospect and had dreaded it.

Another deeply imbedded memory from 597 for the prisoners of war was the humiliating capture and exile of their king, Jehoiachin (1:2). His humiliation as their representative head was most likely felt to be their humiliation as well. Nebuchadnezzar's installation of a puppet ruler, Mattaniah or Zedekiah, in place of Jehoiachin appears to have been both humiliating and unpopular with some Jews, judging from the prophet Ezekiel's continuing recognition to the deposed Jehoiachin and Yahweh's dismissive words about the "profane and wicked prince" Zedekiah (21:25 [MT 21:30]), who should "remove the turban and take off the crown" (21:26 [31]).

In 12:11 Yahweh foretells the disaster to come in 586 when the house of Israel will "go into exile, into captivity (בַּשִּׁבְיָ, cf. 21:24 [28])." One assumes that the exiles of 597 also felt themselves to be captives, especially as they recalled the day they began to be marched off to Babylon, possibly in actual chains (רְתוּקִים, 7:23; cf. 34:27). They may, too, have felt stripped and raped by their enemy.[43] It is true that most scholars believe that the

[43] Excellent work has now been done to explain the rhetoric in chapters 16 and 23 as expressive of a trauma of violence and disgrace, a "real experience of chains, imprisonment, futility and defilement." (Corrine L. Patton, "'Should Our Sister Be Treated Like a Whore?' A Response to Feminist Critiques of Ezekiel 23," in *The Book of Ezekiel*, eds. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, 237.) See also Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Ezekiel in Abu Ghraib," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World*, and the literature he cites. He also reminds readers of the semantic relationship of "to strip" and "to go into exile," as both deriving from the same root, גלה.

Jewish exiles experienced a large measure of personal liberty in Babylon.[44] Nevertheless, the reality of their political subjugation apparently led generations of Jews to regard themselves as "slaves" and to feel "great distress" (Neh. 9:36-7), even after they had returned to the land and were probably living in much better circumstances. The slaves needed rescue from a cruel "yoke" of "servitude" (Ezek. 34:27).

It must have been a most sorrowful journey, as the exiles of 597 walked the long road to Babylonia. We imagine they had too much time for thinking and worrying. Their future was entirely uncertain, and they must have raised many unsettling practical questions. What awaited them in a foreign land? Where and how would they live? Would they be treated ruthlessly and enslaved? Would they ever see home again? How would they educate their children? Where would they bury their dead in Babylonia? What would happen to their extended families, their houses and fields, and their possessions back in the land of their fathers? Would they be able to retain their rights of inheritance? Alongside these practical questions, religious questions must have surfaced just as quickly.

What were the deportees' impressions of Mesopotamia? Life in Babylonia, the place of their exile, is likened to residing "in a wilderness, in a dry and parched land" (19:13). There are convincing reasons to take this characterization as metaphorical and as speaking of a miserable experience of the soul. While it is possible that some Judahite exiles found their climate inhospitable (perhaps a settlement at drier and hotter Nippur[45]), much of the evidence points to the establishment of large Jewish settlements in close proximity to the Euphrates and the surrounding well-irrigated area of canals (Ezek. 1:1; 3:15; Psa. 137:1). Drought would not have been a typical problem faced by the exiles. However, they may well have felt themselves to be living in a "desert" of emptiness and despair (cf. Psa. 63:1).

The stresses of living as exiles in the early sixth century B.C. would have had many effects, including the felt need for unity and for the quick establishment of community leadership. Perhaps we can draw comparisons with our own day. While it is common for

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[44] Oded writes ("Judah and the Exile," 483), "One gets the impression that they had a certain internal autonomy and that they enjoyed the freedom to manage their community life (Ezek. 33.30-3). . . . They were allowed to live according to the customs of their fathers and were allowed to buy property (Jer. 29.5) and even slaves (Ezra 2.65)."

[45] Judith A. Franke, "Nippur," *ABD*, 4:1119-22.

modern refugees and exiles to take opportunity to "close ranks" with their own kind in an alien society, the heartbreaking sense of loss and the "culture shock" they experience in making a new life can contribute to angry, bitter, and impatient attitudes in interpersonal relationships. Hurting, needy people can find it difficult to build community without strong leadership. Even with able leadership in place, the community can sharply disagree and divide over key issues such as conformity to a "host culture." Some, especially the younger members of the community, may desire to adapt and conform in large measure (cf. Ezek. 20:32), while others will fight to conserve the old traditional ways. There is no reason to doubt that Jewish exiles 2500 years ago would have had struggles and needs similar to these. What leadership would emerge among the Jewish exiles to address these matters? The book of Ezekiel reveals a vital concern for unity and leadership in the exilic community.[46]

According to the testimony of the prophecy (17:13), there was a large pool from which to draw leaders for the exilic community.[47] The biblical records, that Jehoiachin was young and inexperienced when he ascended the throne of Judah (2 Kings 24:8) and was for long years held in prison in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27),[48] would account for the lack of evidence that he played any role of leadership among the deportees. In place of a Davidic ruler, the exiles seem to have been led by "elders" (זקני ישראל)[49] in each community (8:1; 14:1; 20:1, 3). Thus, there is a strong note of discontinuity between political life before and after the deportation in 597; and remarkably there is a return in Babylon to a leadership pattern

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[46] See Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, VTSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

[47] The Babylonians sought to decapitate the Judahite revolt by deporting the nation's leadership and intelligentsia, who would have had the most to lose: wealth, property, social position, political power.

[48] Note the discussions in T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), 356-69; and Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings*, AB (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1988), 328-30.

[49] Recent studies of the term "elders"—which was probably not stable in meaning over time—and the elder role in the Old Testament include: J. Conrad, "זקן," *TDOT*, vol. 4: 122-31; Joachim Buchholz, *Die Ältesten Israels im Deuteronomium*, Göttinger Theologischer Arbeiten 36 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988); Hanoch Reviv, *The Elders in Ancient Israel: A Study of a Biblical Institution*, trans. Lucy Plitmann (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989); and Timothy M. Willis, *The Elders of the City: A Study of the Elders-Laws in Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001). Reviv's conclusion was that the elders "maintained national identity during the Babylonian exile" (191).

said to be more characteristic of the period of the Exodus (Exod. 17:5; 18:12; 24:1) and Israel's wilderness wanderings (Num. 11:16).

b. The Babylonian Exile and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Already we have noted the recent proposal of Daniel Smith-Christopher that Ezekiel and his fellow exiles, as traumatized victims of "terrorism," may have experienced what is today termed Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[50] This proposal deserves some consideration, even though a diagnosis today, at a time so far removed from the Babylonian Exile, and concerning a subject (Ezekiel) or subjects (the community in exile) who cannot be observed or interviewed, would be unfounded.[51] A somewhat controversial[52] psychiatric category, the PTSD diagnosis developed in the latter half of the twentieth century[53] as physicians and mental health professionals observed and cared for patients recovering from traumatic experiences. The patients could be victims or witnesses of tragedy. And the

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[50] Among the better, more succinct discussions of the disorder are: Nancy C. Andreasen, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," in *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, 3rd ed., vol. 2, edited by H. L. Kaplan, A. M. Freedman, and B. J. Sadock, 1517-25 (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1980); American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition (DSM-IV) (Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), §309.81; and Gordon J. Turnbull, "A Review of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Part I: Historical Development and Classification," *Injury* 29.2 (1998): 87-91. One of the fullest and most recent discussions of PTSD is David J. Nutt, Jonathan R. T. Davidson, and Joseph Zohar, *Post-traumatic Stress Disorders: Diagnosis, Management and Treatment* (London: Dunitz, 2000).

[51] These obstacles have not deterred some from examining figures and events in history with a view to diagnosing PTSD. See B. Parry-Jones and W. L. L. Parry-Jones, "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Supportive Evidence from an Eighteenth Century Natural Disaster," *Psychological Medicine* 24 (1994): 15-27; Menachem Ben-Ezra, "Earliest Evidence of Post-traumatic Stress?" *British Journal of Psychiatry* 179 (2001): 467; idem, "Trauma 4,000 Years Ago?" *American Journal of Psychiatry* 159 (2002): 1437.

[52] David Straton, "The Trouble with PTSD," *Traumatology (e)* [serial online] 5.1 (1999), article #4, available at: http://www.fsu.edu/%7Etrauma/Art4v5i1.html (accessed 13 September 2005). See also Rachel Yehuda, and Alexander C. McFarlane, "Conflict Between Current Knowledge About Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Its Original Conceptual Basis," available at: http://www.trauma-pages.com/yehuda95.htm (accessed 13 September 2005).

[53] Though so-called "stress disorders" have a long descriptive history in medical care, it was not until the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III) in 1980 that PTSD appeared as an operational diagnosis. Prior to that time physicians had used a much varied terminology: battle hysteria, shell shock, irritable heart of soldiers, combat fatigue, flashbacks, traumatic neuroses of war, and the formal diagnoses of "gross stress reaction" in the Korean War era DSM-I (1952) and "acute reaction to stress" in the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-9, from 1978). Some of the most important work done in this area of stress disorders concerned the survivors of concentration camps during World War II. The effects of such prolonged and extreme suffering in those camps were commonly so debilitating that psychiatrists now prefer a separate designation for similar cases: "acute stress disorder" or ASD (in DSM-IV).

"stressor" event could be a trauma inflicted by another human being or animal,[54] an accident (such as a fire or plane crash), or a natural disaster (earthquake, flood, etc.).

Could there be aspects of PTSD which might be relevant to the study of Ezekiel's prophecy, to the experience of the prophet himself, or that of the exiles among whom he ministered? Mental health professionals speak of traumatic experiences as commonly having serious emotional and psychological consequences. There may be nightmares, flashbacks, or "intrusive memories," in which the victim (or observer of the traumatic event) relives the terrifying event and possibly imagines its recurrence. Feelings of great anxiety, nervousness, and helplessness are symptomatic, especially when memories of the trauma are aroused. The sufferer may experience what psychiatrists term "dissociation," which is the avoidance of whatever might stimulate distressing memories. Some may suffer impairment of memory or amnesia. Physiological problems can also come: for example, panic attacks with chest pain, headaches, and insomnia. (See Table 9 for the diagnostic criteria for PTSD used today in the health field.) Could such difficulties in coping with tragedy have been experienced by Ezekiel and the Jews among whom he lived in Babylonia? They had indeed suffered a heart-rending exile from home. They had been carted off to the East against their will and had lost many of the structures and relationships they needed to thrive. The deportees had seen the complete disruption of their lives and struggled to find meaning in their new situation.

Upon close examination of the prophecy, there does not appear to be convincing evidence of PTSD symptoms exhibited by Ezekiel or his fellow exiles. Using Table 9 below, we can agree that the necessary conditions for PTSD were present. According to the biblical account the Jews in Babylon had been "exposed to a traumatic event" (A.1), but it is impossible to gauge their emotional response to events in 597 without a high degree of guesswork. We cannot say to what extent their "response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror" (A.2). Perhaps the exiles' single emotion—unrelated to PTSD—which stems from the trauma of 597 and which seems to be indicated by Ezekiel's prophecy

[54] The events could include crimes such as rape, violent assault, or childhood physical/sexual abuse; wartime experiences such as combat, displacement of refugees, incarceration in a POW camp; terrorist acts and genocide; and personal tragedies involving animal attacks—my own Christian mission organization in central Africa has lost personnel to lions, crocodiles, elephants, and snakes.

would be bitter resentment over what they perceived to be unjust suffering (18:2, 25, 29). With regard to Criterion B, we are again left guessing whether or not Ezekiel and other members of the exilic community "persistently re-experienced" the traumas of siege and deportation through intrusive memories and nightmares.[55] Criterion C in its seven parts (dissociation, amnesia) cannot be met because there is no opportunity for clinical observation. The same judgment holds true for Criteria D, E, and F. The interpreter of Ezekiel can neither prove nor disprove any prevalence of PTSD among the Babylonian exiles which derives from the traumatic experiences of 597. We can only imagine. This outcome is not entirely unexpected, given that Ezekiel's prophecy speaks mainly of future traumas (the coming wrath upon Jerusalem), not those in the recent past.

Much more data and evidence can be drawn from Ezekiel's oracles regarding trauma and PTSD-type symptoms to be experienced by Israel in future years. It is most unusual to read *predictions* of such symptoms as following in the wake of prophesied horrors; normally PTSD is only discussed as a response to memories of past events.[56] There is an abundance of vivid language in Ezekiel describing the anguish of Jerusalem's inhabitants when Yahweh pours out his wrath. One may even argue that the emotional distress of the Jerusalemites is a major emphasis of the oracles of judgment and is an intended part of the punishment. Yahweh will bring "a singular evil" (7:5)[57] upon the city which will cause the residents to experience anxiety and shuddering (דאגה, שׁממון, 4:16; cf. 12:19); panic/ dismay (מהומה, 7:7; 22:5); moaning (המות, 7:16); horror (פלצות, 7:18); anguish (קפדה, 7:25); mourning (אבל in Hithpa'el, 7:27); quaking and trembling at mealtime (רגזה, רעשׁ, 12:18-19); their hearts melting in fear (למוג לב, 21:15 [20]); and horror

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[55] Some interpreters of the prophecy could suggest that Ezekiel 1 records a hallucinational experience tied to past suffering. This suggestion, however, would be out of accord with PTSD research, which points to nightmares and hallucinations that reimagine or relive the "stressor" event.

[56] Many scholars would contend that the oracles merely purport to prophesy these anxious responses to future events. They would urge that the responses be dated post-586 and that these texts point to redaction work. Even if one rejects the element of prophecy, the future orientation of the texts describing PTSD-type symptoms is noteworthy. In Ezekiel's theology, the distress of the Jerusalemites is a part of Yahweh's intended judgment.

[57] For a discussion of the text critical issue at 7:5—אחת רעה or אחר רעה—and the old Jewish rendering of the Hebrew, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, pp. 142, 147-48.

(שׁמה, 23:33). The inhabitants of Jerusalem will know such a paralyzing fear and helplessness that "all hands are feeble/go limp and all knees run as water (7:17); later in the same chapter we read that "the hands of the people of the land are palsied with terror" (בהל in Niph'al, 7:27).[58] Perhaps the most vivid description of the people's overwhelming grief comes in the allegory of chapter 23: "and you will tear your breasts" (ושׁריך תנתקי, v. 34).[59] Even the surrounding nations will experience a horror as they witness Yahweh's judgment upon his people (5:15).

Ezekiel is called to be a sign to the people in his heart-breaking and bitter groans before the people (האנח בשׁברון מתנים ובמרירות תאנח, 21:6 [11]), and in his wailing and crying (זעק והילל, 21:12 [17]). A trauma so terrible is coming upon Jerusalem, and it will surely bring wailing. It is only in response to news of Jerusalem's fall and destruction that the exiles of 597 are said in 21:7 [12] to show the trauma-type (and PTSD-type) symptoms of feeling terror and utter helplessness: "every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will run as water."[60]

There is scant evidence of any "anxiety disorder" (the more general class of which PTSD is a part) among the Babylonian exiles which relates to the trauma of 597. We are left with suppositions rather than hard evidence of PTSD-like symptoms; this is due to the fact that Ezekiel is not all focused upon the human side of the dialogue or human expression and emotions. Indeed, emotions are famously suppressed in chapter 24 with the death of Ezekiel's wife, a sign-act of the numbed and resigned response of the exiles to news of Jerusalem's fall. This may be regarded as one aspect of the exiles' prophesied response to Jerusalem's disastrous fall that a psychiatrist could associate with PTSD, that is, emotional

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[58] This translation is suggested by John Joseph Owens, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament, Volume 4: Isaiah–Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 493.

[59] This could also be taken as "a paroxysm of self-loathing (cf. 20:43b; 36:31b)," as suggested by Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 484.

[60] The last of these phrases, "and all knees with run as water" (וכל־ברכים תלכנה מים) is often understood in the sense of knees becoming weak as water (e.g., NIV, ESV) or turning to water (NRSV, JPS). This interpretation seems strong if "all knees run as water" is believed to be parallel to "all hands will be feeble," just as the phrases, "every heart will melt" and "every spirit will faint," run parallel to each other. Greenberg offers a rather different explanation of the Hebrew phrase, that it means "to urinate from fear" (*Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 422); Block is in agreement (*The Book of Ezekiel 1–24*, pp. 261, 671) and draws support from the LXX rendering and a neo-Assyrian description.

detachment or numbness (restricted range of emotions) which could contribute to deterioration in one's interpersonal relationships.[61]

Ezekiel's oracles, of course, have no modern psychological orientation. Ezekiel's prophecy was not a therapeutic intervention, and it is invalid to read the book as though a counselor were pursuing certain "therapy goals" in what was said to the audience, the exilic community. The oracles do speak to the heartbreak and fears of the deportees, but these problems are discussed within a spiritual and religious frame of reference. The spiritual "diagnosis" offered by Ezekiel is not that the Jewish exiles are innocent victims of tragedy and the cruel actions of others; rather, they have wronged others, especially Yahweh their God. Rather than seek to assuage a false guilt (survivor guilt perhaps?),[62] Ezekiel indicts them as truly guilty people who have deserved punishment and suffering. Ezekiel denied to the deportees any "victim status" and insisted on a certain explanation for the exiles' suffering. His direct, confrontational approach may not be considered prudent by modern therapists, but Ezekiel appears to have operated with the assumption that, for the Jews in Babylon, theological truth was most necessary for processing the feelings and disturbing thoughts issuing from both the trauma of coerced displacement and the news that a worse disaster would, and did, befall the city which was their "joy and glory" (24:25).

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[61] Margaret S. Odell has made a good case that the "Ezekiel persona" is not suffering any involuntary emotional paralysis in his hour of grief (an incapacity to mourn). She urges that less attention be paid to historical concerns than to questions of literary function. In the case of this text she brilliantly points to intertextual connections with Lev. 10, especially דמם, and the "acceptance of divine judgment in both contexts" (201). She concludes that the divine command not to mourn is decisive for our interpretation of the prophet's self-restraint and indicates not only the divine intention that Jerusalem's judgment not be mourned but also that Yahweh "has chosen the exilic community over Jerusalem" (196). See "Genre and Persona in Ezekiel 24:15-24," in *The Book of Ezekiel*, eds., Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, 195-219. The conjunction of texts which commend a mourning attitude (9:4) and prohibit mourning deserves further research.

[62] In the original diagnostic criteria for PTSD (DSM-III, 1980), a symptom to be recognized was: "Guilt about surviving while others have not, or about behavior required for survival." This symptom was deleted in DSM-IV. It seems highly unlikely that there was any aspect of "survivor guilt" in the exiles' psychology, because they would have felt themselves to be the victims, in contrast to others who had escaped the calamity of deportation. The exiles would not have understood themselves to be "survivors" at all, for they were worse off—or seemed to be worse off—than their fellow Judahites who remained back in the land of the fathers. What is fascinating to note is that Ezekiel will disabuse them of the notion that they are worse off. Ezekiel's oracles drive home the point that those deported in 597 are indeed the survivors, and it is with the Jewish community in Babylon that Israel's future lies. Those Jews who remained in the land post-597 will not survive the judgments that Yahweh will rain down upon covenant-breakers.

Table 9. — Diagnostic Criteria for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, DSM-IV, 309.81)

A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:
   1. The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
   2. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. *Note:* In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior.

B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
   1. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. *Note:* In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.
   2. Recurrent distressing dreams of the event. *Note:* In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognizable content.
   3. Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated). *Note:* In young children, trauma-specific re-enactment may occur.
   4. Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
   5. Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:
   1. Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma.
   2. Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma.
   3. Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma.
   4. Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.
   5. Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
   6. Restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings).
   7. Sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span).

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the following:
   1. Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
   2. Irritability or outbursts of anger.
   3. Difficulty concentrating.
   4. Hypervigilance.
   5. Exaggerated startle response.

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in Criteria B, C, and D) is more than 1 month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

Specify if:

Acute: If duration of symptoms is less than 3 months.
Chronic: If duration of symptoms is 3 months or more.
With Delayed Onset: If onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor.

c. An "Analogy of Situation"?

Moshe Greenberg has written that within the biblical tradition—meaning the Jewish canon—Moses has the central place as "the mediator of Israel's divine constitution, the Torah."[63] The tradition "recognizes no other legislator." But then Greenberg quickly brings forward one exception: Ezekiel. It is remarkable indeed that the priest-prophet fills a Mosaic role in delivering a body of law to God's people; in this respect Ezekiel is like Moses but unlike any of the other writing prophets. To account for this profound exception in Israel's religious history, Greenberg suggests that an "analogy of situation" required that Ezekiel perform this duty.

As we have just discussed, the Jewish exiles in Babylon had suffered the loss of all their earthly moorings: their homes and property rights; much of their social network; their political and economic life in Judah; their personal freedom. Just as serious was their spiritual loss, being cut off from their place of worship and from the whole religious context in which they were to have lived and died. The exilic community, Greenberg avers, needed a Moses-like leader because their situation in Babylon as the "alien and homeless"[64] was analogous to the alien and homeless position of the slaves in Egypt. As in Moses' day so also in Ezekiel's, there was need, not only for physical redemption in an Exodus accomplished by God, but also for spiritual renewal in a covenant which included stipulations for holy living in God's presence.

Greenberg says that Israel's flouting of the original covenant stipulations (mediated by Moses) had eventually led to disaster. There had been moral and spiritual failure; "the vehicles and guardians of God's indwelling presence—the temple, its rites, and its personnel—had proved inadequate."[65] Ezekiel witnessed how idolators were polluting the temple and how God at last would abandon his sanctuary. But there was hope for a

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[63] Moshe Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," in *Interpreting the Prophets*, eds. James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 216-17.

[64] Ibid., 217.

[65] Ibid., 217.

devastated and defiled Israel in a divine two-part plan which addressed both the breakdown of sacred institutions and human unfaithfulness. First of all, Greenberg writes,

> The lesson of the failed experiment must be put into effect by revision of these sacred institutions. As Moses spelled out the meaning of "a holy nation" to an unformed people just liberated from Egypt, so Ezekiel specified the needful changes in the vessels and symbols of God's presence in the future commonwealth of those near redemption from the Babylonian exile.

Secondly, God announced his resolve to remove Israel's "heart of stone" and gift her with a "heart of flesh." Such a divine work, announced by the prophet Ezekiel, would finally deal with the problem of human unfaithfulness and ensure that the covenant stipulations would be kept.

Greenberg's conclusion is that the disaster of the exile, and the deportees' experience of being "alien and homeless," was a situation analogous to bondage in Egypt. The trauma of Israel studied in this chapter uncovered societal and personal, physical and spiritual needs which God would begin to meet through a new deliverance (Exodus) and through the ministry of a new legislator, a new Moses. "Analogy of situation produced similar prophetic roles."[66] It continues to be useful to highlight the Exodus-Ezekiel link in this study.

3. The Babylonian Exiles' Frame Of Mind And Theological Questions, As Evidenced In Ezekiel's Oracles

οιδ' εγω φευγοντας ανδρας ελπιδας σιτουμενους.
– (Αιγισθος) Aeschylus[67]

The trauma of the exile left an impress on the Jewish nation, on the Jewish mind and faith, which endures to this day. According to the testimony of Zechariah 7:5-7, the exiles fasted during the fifth (Ab) and seventh (Tishri) months for seventy years in order to mourn their loss. Also there is a long-standing liturgical tradition within Judaism of mourning the tragedy of Jerusalem's destruction(s) on the 9th of Ab. The experience of the Babylonian

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[66] Ibid., 217.

[67] "I know that men in exile feed on [dreams of] hope." Aeschylus *Agamemnon*, line 1668.

Exile taught the nation to grieve its loss and to hope—as exiles must!—for a return home. That exile and the restoration period together became foundational for Israel and developing Judaism. Jacob Neusner asserts that the Scriptural account, "that Israel died and was reborn, was punished through exile and then forgiven," has become an orienting and defining story for the people of God. Neusner says, ". . . this is critical—to be Israel in a genealogical sense is to have gone into exile and returned to Zion."[68]

a. Devotion to Jerusalem and Yahweh's Coming Judgment

A devotion to home and a desire to return to Jerusalem were defining marks of the Jews in Babylon. This is recognized in the Yahweh speeches in Ezekiel which emphasize the exiles' love for Zion, and more especially for the Temple, by piling up terms of endearment.[69] Yahweh declares, "I am about to desecrate my sanctuary, the pride of your strength (גאון עזכם), the delight of your eyes (מחמד עיניכם), and the passion of your life" (24:21).[70] A few verses later (v. 25) some of these affectionate terms are repeated and others are added: "their stronghold (מעוזם), the joy of their glory (משוש תפארתם), the delight of their eyes, and their soul's exultation (ואת־משא נפשם)." The testimony of Ezekiel's prophecy regarding the exiles' devotion to home is fully in line with the memorable lament of the deportees in Psalm 137, which invokes a self-imprecation, "if I do not remember you [Jerusalem] and consider Jerusalem above my greatest joy" (v. 6).

A deep longing to receive news about home probably explains the elders' continued consulting with Yahweh's prophet. In each place where the book of Ezekiel mentions the elders in Babylon (8:1; 14:1; 20:1),[71] the prophet reports that they were "sitting before me," presumably to inquire of Yahweh about their home. In two of these oracles just mentioned,

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[68] Jacob Neusner, *Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Exile and Return in the History of Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 34.

[69] A similar collection of emotionally charged references to an object of affection—also about to be taken away—is to be found in God's directions for Abraham to sacrifice the child of promise (Gen. 22:2): "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and you yourself go to the land of Moriah. Offer him there . . ."

[70] Block's rendering of מחמל נפשכם (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 784).

[71] There are also mentions of "the elders" back in the land (8:11ff.; 9:6), and these have a negative tone.

there follows an unsparing denunciation of Jerusalem's evils, especially idolatry, and a prophecy that judgment upon the city is certain (9:4ff.; 11:7ff.; 14:21ff.). The elders wanted news, but not this: "I send my four harsh (רע) judgments upon Jerusalem: sword, famine, wild beasts, and plague, to kill off man and animal" (14:21). It was most unwelcome news to the exiles that beloved Jerusalem (a) was an unbearable offense to Yahweh, and (b) was to suffer an unprecedented (5:9) and terrible desolation. But Ezekiel's oracles introduce a third idea which was even more incredible to hear: (c) Yahweh himself would send the destroyers. Ezekiel proclaimed that Jerusalem's destruction was Yahweh's will and Yahweh's work. This must have been a shock to all those who desired to return to their home in the land of their ancestors.

The deportees' longing to return home to Jerusalem was to be tempered by Ezekiel's exposé of the wickedness and violence there[72] and by the announcements that utter devastation is coming upon the city. Though there was misery in the life of an exile, returning home to Jerusalem would invite even worse trouble. Adapting Ezekiel's cooking pot image, one could speak of jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The rhetorical and literary effect of Ezekiel's message was to cause the audience or readership to distance themselves and distinguish themselves from the population of the land. Even more, Ezekiel's oracles call upon the audience and readership to join Yahweh and the prophet in confronting Jerusalem with her abominations (הודע את־ירושלם את־תועבתיה, 16:2) and judging the wicked city as receiving due punishment (7:3-4, 8; 20:4; 22:2; 23:36; 33:20).

b. Devotion to Jerusalem and Negative Reports about the Jerusalemites

Devotion to Jerusalem and a sense of kinship with the Jerusalemites were also challenged by negative divine reports about those remaining back in the land. First of all, Yahweh compared the inhabitants of Jerusalem unfavorably with the exilic community. The few who escape death in the coming destruction of Jerusalem and go into exile will prove to be a reprehensible lot, more degenerate than the deportees of 597 (14:22-23):

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[72] Renz makes this same point in *The Rhetorical Function*, 67.

> But look, any survivors left in her to be led out—sons and daughters—when they come out to you [in Babylon] and you see their manners/behavior and their deeds, you will be consoled for the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, for all that I have brought upon her. They will be a consolation[73] to you when you see their manners/behavior and their deeds; then you shall know that nothing of all that I have done in her is without cause, declares the Lord Yahweh.

While Yahweh has regard for the exiles and reveals his gracious presence to them in a foreign country (ch. 1; 11:16), those living in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel are referred to as "dross" (סיג). They are waste which is "left in the furnace" (22:18), and Yahweh declares, "Look! I will gather you inside Jerusalem" (v. 19), with the intention of blasting them in his hot anger and melting them (v. 21). The revelation of the extent and brazenness of idolatry in Jerusalem (ch. 8) is meant to shock Ezekiel the exile. The evil of the city is such that Yahweh cannot find even one person of spiritual standing and integrity among all the leaders there (22:30; cf. Jer. 5:1-5). The people and the leaders together are regarded as morally and spiritually bankrupt. This leads the audience or reader of the oracles to mark a moral and spiritual distinction—not an absolute distinction,[74] but a real distinction nonetheless—between the communities in Babylon and Judah.

The reader of Ezekiel's prophecy gets the sense that the Jerusalemites have been "written off" and consigned to a nearly all-consuming judgment. They may be likened to the "bad figs" of Jeremiah 24. There is no future for that whole crowd,[75] and the mere handful that Yahweh will spare only serve as a testimony to their own corruption (6:8-10; 7:16) and as a lesson for onlookers, both among the *gôyîm* (12:16) and the Babylonian exiles (14:22-23). The exposé of Jerusalem's turpitude and the divine judgment oracles condemning the city may signal Yahweh's intention that the exiles turn away from Jerusalem's population in disgust, just as Yahweh does (23:18; cf. 24:23).

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[73] "Be a consolation" seems more appropriate as a rendering of נחם in Piel than "console," since the latter might be understood in the sense of offering words of comfort/consolation.

[74] Andrew Mein correctly notes that "both before and after the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel placed a higher value on the exiles than on those remaining in the land, but this does not mean that the exiles are absolved from responsibility, nor do they occupy the moral high ground." (*Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile*, Oxford Theological Monographs [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 235).

[75] The NIV translation does well in communicating the derogatory tone of Yahweh's speech against Jerusalem in 7:10-14 by rendering המונה as "that crowd" or "the whole crowd."

Secondly, there are divine reports that the Jerusalemites hold the exiles in disregard as those who are "gone far from Yahweh" (רחקו מעל יהוה, 11:15)[76] and who can no longer contest the remaining inhabitants' property claims.[77] Rather than mourn the loss of their compatriots after the exile of 597, they gleefully seize their opportunity to take possession of what formerly belonged to the privileged elite. The triumphal declaration, "to us this land is given as a possession," appears more than once (11:15; 33:24);[78] the evil in this attitude becomes apparent in the echoing text, 36:2, which quotes the surrounding enemy nations as reveling in Judah's disaster: "Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession!"

The revealing of this contemptuous attitude could have had the effect of striking at the exiles' morale, as argued by Block.[79] It would have been a harsh blow to those who sought solidarity with the community "back home." It is also plausible, however, that that prideful attitude in Jerusalem provoked anger (Prov. 13:10) and a quarrelsome spirit in the exilic community. Perhaps there was a dual effect: discouragement and anger. Such a report could not have helped but to promote among the exiles a community identity which was distinct from the Jerusalemites. If the latter are distinguishing themselves from, and even disparaging, the Jews in Babylonia, this news would encourage a rift to develop. Perhaps that social division would somehow serve God's purpose of breaking the exiles' emotional, spiritual and religious ties to idolatrous Jerusalem. A new identity could be forged.

Yahweh's message in 11:15, reporting the hostility of the Jerusalemites, is a response to Ezekiel; it is firmly set in the context of Ezekiel's horrified complaint when Pelatiah drops dead, "Ah, Lord Yahweh! Will you finish off the remnant of Israel?" (11:13).

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[76] It is best to follow most scholars (since Hitzig) in repointing the imperative as a perfect, despite the lack of good external text-critical evidence. E.g., Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 221; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, p. 128; Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel (Ezechiel), Kapitel 1–19*, p. 127; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 341. Retaining the MT's vocalization are Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 189; and Brownlee, *Ezekiel 1–19*, pp. 163-64.

[77] It is notable that Jerusalem's attitude toward the exiles—they are far away and can take no interest in our dealings here—runs parallel to the city's attitude toward Yahweh, as one who "has forsaken the land and does not see" our dealings here (8:12; 9:9).

[78] Note also the triumphalist attitude in 11:3: "this city is the pot and we are the meat."

[79] *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 349.

God's word in that context appears to challenge the prophet's assumption that Pelatiah belongs to the remnant (שְׁאֵרִית) of God's true people. The message put across might be: "Pelatiah is among those who would exclude you and the rest of the Jews in Babylon from the people of God." In Ezekiel's book there is a theological interest in who truly belongs to Israel, those whose names are to "be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel" (13:9; cf. Exod 32:33). When true Israel is included in the restoration and re-enters the land (11:16-20), but observes wicked Jews being excluded (11:21; 13:9), this will be Yahweh's self-revelation. "Then you shall know that I am Lord Yahweh" (13:9).

c. Devotion to Jerusalem and Yahweh's Judgment in 597

Among the many texts which declare that Yahweh is scattering Israel among the nations (4:13; 5:10; 11:16; 12:15; 36:19), a single one refers back to the deportation in 597 (11:16).[80] There are additional indications, however, that the exiles understood their deportation as an act of Yahweh and were wrestling with the theological ramifications of this understanding. They did not question or debate Yahweh's sovereignty in the tragic events which had overtaken them. Instead, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem they asserted the culpability of their ancestors (18:2), and they accused Yahweh of being "unscrupulous"[81] or unjust in punishing the undeserving (18:25, 29; cf. 33:17, 20): "The way of the Lord is not right (לֹא יִתָּכֵן)." They believed it was wrong for Yahweh to remove them from their beloved home and to bring such suffering upon them.

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[80] Even without the single text, the deportees' conclusion that Yahweh had sent them into exile would have been a natural inference from the constant drumbeat of oracles announcing Yahweh's coming wrath upon Jerusalem. The covenant God who destroys and scatters in judgment *has already* destroyed and scattered in judgment.

[81] This is Block's rendering, which he seems to prefer as more exact than other glosses: without principle (lacking a standard); arbitrary; nonsensical. (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, pp. 584-85; *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, pp. 250-52.) It is difficult to settle on an English equivalent to לֹא תִכֹּן (Niphal) that works well as the people's accusation against Yahweh and also as Yahweh's counter-accusation against the people. E.g., "unfair" does not well express the sense of Yahweh's countercharge. "Not right" (cf. Walther Zimmerli's "nicht richtig," *Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 392) has a wide semantic range and works well. Zimmerli posits that the point of attack in the people's accusation is "Jahwes Handeln . . . in seiner Ordnung" (ibid., 413), which is similar to Block's view. *HALOT* suggests "to measure up, be in order, be correct." Allen (*Ezekiel 1–19*, pp.) translates the verb + לֹא as "inconsistent," following Greenberg's proposal that the verb be read "as tolerative nif'al" in the sense of "determinable" (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 333); Greenberg's own polished translation has "does not conform to rule" (but see note 83 below).

Evidence that the exiles continued to wrestle with the theological issues of guilt and their relationship to Yahweh is found in 33:10. Perhaps this reported saying shows some openness on the part of the exiles to accepting Ezekiel's accusations:[82] "Our transgressions and sins weigh upon us, and because of them we waste away. How then can we live?" Adding to the struggle to comprehend their own disaster of 597 were Ezekiel's judgment oracles about the nearing devastation of Jerusalem and the slaughter of "your sons and daughters" (24:21, 25). And Ezekiel insisted that all the destruction and horror was Yahweh's will and work! What kind of God draws the sword against his own people?

Though Ezekiel's prophecy does not provide much of a record of how the exiles of 597 voiced their agonizing theological questions and searched for explanations,[83] we must understand their traumatic experience as having provoked a soul-searching. In the last century Martin Buber was able to give voice to the agony of the Jewish querist in times of suffering, whether forcibly marched off to Babylon in 597 BC or deported by cattle-car to the Nazi *Vernichtungslager* at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943:

> How is life with God still possible in a time in which there is an Oswiecim? The estrangement has become too cruel, the hiddenness too deep. One can still 'believe' in the God who allowed those things to happen, but can one still speak to Him? Can one still hear His word? Can one still . . . enter into a dialogic relationship with him? . . . Dare we recommend to . . . the Job of the gas chambers: "Call to Him, for He is kind, for His mercy endureth forever"?[84]

The thought that Yahweh has exiled his own people carries most troubling implications for the emotionally traumatized. "How can I trust such a God?" An exile's whole world,

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[82] Those inclined toward psychological analysis might at this point bring forward the notion of a "grief cycle," experienced by those who are bereaved. After an initial period of denial (it was the fathers, not we, who sinned) and possible withdrawal, there is a succession of anger; bargaining; depression ("how can we live?"); acceptance; and hope.

[83] Could Ezekiel 33:17, translated in a slightly different fashion, hint at the exiles' frustrated search for an understanding of God's ways? Greenberg possibly surprises some of his readers in his second volume by questioning his own rendering of לא יתכן. He says, "But it is hard to see why the demoralized audience of vs. 10 (or any other) should cavil at the hope-inspiring way of judgment or consider it 'not conforming to rule'" (*Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 674). Greenberg then cites the work of Adrian Graffy (*A Prophet Confronts His People*, AnBib 104 [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1984], 76-77), who proposes the translation, "the way of the Lord cannot be fathomed." Greenberg responds positively to the proposal: "This is an expression of surprise and difficulty in understanding how they can avoid wasting away in their sin, and hints at reluctance to change their ways. God throws it back in their face, declaring that their way—knowing the way to life (= repentance) and not following it—is incomprehensible."

[84] *At the Turning: Three Addresses on Judaism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), 61; cited by Stephen M. Panko, *Martin Buber*, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1976), 32-33.

whole conception of the world and its order, is thrown over. But that thought—Yahweh has done this!—which develops from an awareness of Yahweh's sovereign power, also carries a seed of hope. "If God has uprooted us, then surely he can plant us again." The hope of return to their beloved home, which daily sustained the spirits of the exiles, had to center upon Yahweh. It was not love for Jerusalem that Ezekiel would have opposed, but the futile hope that Jerusalem would remain unmolested by Babylon, and that a return to an unjudged, still defiled Jerusalem was yet possible for the exilic community. Return was promised to a purified city for a purified people, after Yahweh had shown himself to be holy among his people in the sight of the nations (20:41). "Then you shall know that I am Yahweh, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the land I promised on oath to give to your fathers" (20:42).

The exile from beloved Jerusalem provoked the Jewish community to wrestle with profound theological questions, and the struggle proved to be the remaking of them. Their day of torment was also a day of opportunity for Israel to understand Yahweh and his ways, the nature of the covenant, and their calling to live in holiness for the sake of the Name. Buber, again, puts it well:

> From the moment when a national disaster appears inevitable, and especially after it has become a reality, it can, like every great torment, become a productive force from the religious point of view: it begins to suggest new questions and to stress old ones. Dogmatized conceptions are pondered afresh in the light of the events, and the faith relationship that has to stand the test of an utterly changed situation is renewed in a modified form. But the new acting force is nothing less than the force of extreme despair, a despair so elemental that it can have but one of two results. The sapping of the last will of life, or the renewal of the soul.[85]

4. Israel's Spiritual And Moral State According To Yahweh's Indictment Reported By Ezekiel

If the student of Ezekiel focuses upon the prophet's references to the nation and her sins, a picture of corrupted popular religion and morality emerges and the reader will better understand the prophetic assessment of Israel's spiritual condition.[86] Even those who

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[85] Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*, trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 183; cited by Panko, 34.

[86] For an excellent piece of scholarship which models such a research of popular religion and morality through a close reading of a prophet, see M. Daniel Carroll R., "'For So You Love to Do': Probing

dispute the accuracy of Ezekiel's portrayal of popular Jewish religion and morality[87] must seek to understand Ezekiel's own particular perspective on these subjects; the theological outlook and message of the prophecy will be at least partially hidden from all who fail to weigh the prophet's words about Israel's sins.

From the beginning of the book the Israelites are described as a nation which has rebelled, not only against Nebuchadnezzar to whom they were politically subject, but against their God. Five times in the short second chapter, Israel is called rebellious,[88] and the revolt against Yahweh has been of long duration (2:3). Later on in the book (20:7-8, 13, 21; cf. 23:3, 8, 19), Ezekiel traces this rebelliousness back to the days of the Exodus from Egypt. Perhaps the theme of the nation's rebellion is a key for understanding what Matties termed the "extremes" in Ezekiel's language, including the repetition of the recognition formula.

The rebellion and resistance of the people is a continual theme in Ezekiel. The "rebellious house" characterization is found a total of fourteen times (2:5, 6, 8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2 [2x], 3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6; cf. the similar 20:13). The verbs "to rebel" (מרד, מרה) occur six times in the prophecy to describe Israel's hostile attitude toward Yahweh (2:3; 5:6; 20:8, 13, 21, 38 [participle]), and the adjective "rebellious" (מרי) occurs fifteen times (2:5, 6, 7, 8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2 [2x], 3, 9, 25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6). Among the specific

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Popular Religion in the Book of Amos," in *Rethinking Contexts, Rereading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll R., 168-89, JSOTSup 299 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

[87] This has been done in two ways. First of all, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter (see note 12 above), some scholars like Fishbane doubt the historical accuracy of Ezekiel's list of charges. Secondly, some biblical scholarship repudiates the biblical writers' condemnation of "pagan and syncretistic abuses" (Fohrer, *Introduction*, 237) as propaganda in an ancient rhetorical battle to define the religion. E.g., Susan Ackerman in her Harvard dissertation contends that *authentic* Yahwism was pluriform and could include such allegedly "foreign" features as child-sacrifice, burning incense at the במות, honoring the Queen of Heaven, mourning Tammuz, and bowing down to the sun. Further, the doctrine presented in the prophets and by the Deuteronomists, that such activities were an abhorrent corruption and even a falling away from true Yahwism, is narrow and false. She believes that these theologians were promoting the views and interests of but one faction within Yahwism, and they were repressing others' views. The writings of these theologians were partisan treatises and should be subjected to ideological criticism. (Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah*, HSM 46 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 213-17.) In such a reconstruction of the religion of ancient Israel there is little reason to listen to Ezekiel *as Scripture* and little value to be placed on the prophecy's theological contribution.

[88] In just ten short verses, the term מרי appears five times (vv. 5, 6, 7, 8 [2x]). Additionally, the verb מרד or its participle are used twice in verse 3 to describe the nation of Israel. We finally note in 2:3 the appearance of the verb פשע, a synonym of מרד, and the adjectives in 2:4, קשי and חזק (cf. 3:7-9).

actions of Israel which accord with the "rebel" indictment is the refusal to listen (3:7; cf. 20:8, 39[89]). In some texts the negative לא modifies the verb שׁמע, while elsewhere the verb חדל is used in conjunction with שׁמע (2:5, 7; 3:11, 27).

"Refusal to listen" deserves more reflection on the part of the interpreter. There is a most telling charge at the beginning of the prophecy, where Yahweh calls Ezekiel to a new ministry, saying to the priest-prophet, "Hear what I say to you!" (2:8; 3:10). The submissive, receptive Ezekiel is a foil to his compatriots about whom Yahweh says: "the house of Israel are not willing to hear you because they are not willing to hear me" (3:7). The insistent and repetitive character of Ezekiel's prophecy cannot be explained without reference to this hard-headed and hard-hearted resistance to God's word. The prophet Ezekiel (יחזקאל) was personally fitted or prepared in his personal disposition (3:8-9) for his divine appointment to proclaim Yahweh's word to a people who were of a hard countenance (חזקי־מצח) and of a stubborn heart (וקשׁי־לב). It is also true that the prophet's *message* was fitted for such a resistant people. Perhaps the message needed constant repetition because the word was not being heard much of the time, as Yahweh indicated would be the case (2:7; 3:7). Here we might recall with Greenberg[90] that Moses had been forewarned by God in Exod. 3:19 (cf. Exod. 7:22) that Pharaoh would not listen to him and his word from Yahweh. Could this be another instance where Israel has become like her old nemesis in the land of slavery, the tyrant who declared, "I do not know Yahweh" (Exod. 5:2), and refused to listen? Just as the Pharaoh in Moses' time was hardened against Yahweh and his servant Israel, the nation of Israel in Ezekiel's day is shown to be hardened (חזק) against Yahweh and his servant, the prophet.

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[89] Ezekiel 20:39 presents translation difficulties for the interpreter. A few wish to understand the phrase ואחר אם־אינכם שׁמעים אלי as a strongly worded affirmative, "and hereafter you shall certainly listen to me" (e.g., NIV, JB, but changed in NJB), but the vast majority of interpreters render the Hebrew conditional in a directly literal way: "and afterwards, if you will not listen to me . . ." (NJPS, NRSV, ESV, Greenberg, Allen, Block), with a missing apodosis. Zimmerli regards the "fragmentary clause" as possibly "corrupted at the beginning" and best expunged (*Ezekiel 1*, p. 403), but few today follow Zimmerli on this point. Eichrodt tried to resolve the difficulty by simply deleting ואחר as "a relic of an alternative reading" (*Ezekiel*, 262).

[90] *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 75.

The prophet accuses his rebellious nation of a wide variety of cultic and civil sins, and the religious sins are seemingly counted as more grave than civil sins. Far less attention is given to civil sins, and they are treated in a more general way. For example, Ezekiel 7:23 speaks of the land as "full of bloodshed" and the city of Jerusalem as "full of violence." Those especially responsible for this sin are political leaders, the princes (22:6, 27), but religious leaders are not innocent (22:25). Other civil sins cited are breaking covenant with Yahweh by forging alliances with a series of ungodly nations (16:26-29;[91] 23:5ff.) and the violation of the suzerainty treaty—called a covenant in 17:18—established with victorious Babylon. Ezekiel 18 lists various sins as examples of crimes against the moral law that would merit divine judgment, including sexual immorality, oppression of the poor, usury, robbery, and the breaking of pledges. Chapter 22 also gives a specific catalog of civil sins: showing contempt for parents, mistreating the alien and the widow, incest and other sexual perversion, political conspiracy, and robbery.[92]

More attention is given to cultic sins. As a faithful priest who is concerned for purity and holiness, Ezekiel details the religious offenses which have polluted the people and their worship. They have rejected Yahweh's laws and decrees (5:6-7; 11:12), presumably a reference to Sinai or generally the laws of Moses or both. Instead of following in the ways of Yahweh, the people of Israel "have behaved according to the standards of the nations (כמשפטי הגוים) around [them]" (5:7; 11:12). This covenant-breaking brings Yahweh's judgments (משפטים), which will be performed in the sight of the nations (לעיני הגוים). Israel is censured repeatedly for dishonoring Yahweh by Sabbath-breaking (20:13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8, 26; 23:38). "Your abominations (practices or idols, תועבתיך)" are cause for unprecedented divine judgment (5:8-10), which will include cannibalism during siege and

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[91] Block aptly says, "Jerusalem flirted with the world powers. The order in which these nations are named reflects the history of Israel's contacts with them." *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 495.

[92] Other passages in Ezekiel detailing civil sins are: 8:17; 9:9; 11:6; 12:19; 22:3; 24:6, 9. Could the book of Exodus in some recension, especially "the Book of the Covenant," have served as a/the legal source for the prophet's indictment of particular sins? Ezekiel's vice-catalogs include: contempt for parents (Exod. 20:12; 21:15, 17); oppressing the alien (Exod. 22:21; 23:9) and the widow (Exod. 22:22-24); sexual sins (Exod. 20:14; 22:16-17, 19); robbery (Exod. 20:15; 22:1-4); and usury (Exod. 22:25-27). Walther Eichrodt (*Ezekiel*, 270) has suggested Ezekielian dependence upon the Book of the Covenant in his commentary on the phrase, כל־פטר רחם, in Ezekiel 20:25f. (cf. Exod. 34:19f.).

final exile. There will be no pity "because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable practices and abominations" (5:11).

In chapter 6 Yahweh promises to destroy the high places, the pagan altars, the incense altars, the idols, together with the people who have set them up. This must be done to teach the nation how Yahweh "[has] been grieved by their adulterous heart, which has turned away from [him], and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols" (6:9). The wealth, especially the jewelry with which their covenant God had blessed them, they used to make into "detestable idols and vile images" (7:20; see also 16:10-19; cf. Exodus 32).

In a short but profound passage, 11:16-21, several of the most prominent themes in the prophecy are gathered together: the return from exile as a type of "new Exodus," the bestowal of a new spirit and a responsive heart to the restored people of God, and individual responsibility. The reader learns there of Israel's true plight.[93] The nation continues to practice idolatry with each passing generation because the people's "hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols" (11:21; cf. 14:3). The conversion of the nation is necessary. A new deliverance is needed "to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols" (14:5; cf. 1 Kings 18:37). After Israel's heart renewal, the nation will keep Yahweh's ordinances (ואת־משפטי ישמרו, 11:20).[94]

A deep-seated cynicism added to the religious problems faced by the exiles and those remaining back in Judah (see Jer. 5:13). The proverb in 12:22 records the popular disdain for prophets and their visions: "The days pass by and every vision comes to nothing." The confusion of voices, as Yahweh's true prophets and the false prophets gave out conflicting oracles, fed the cynicism of the people. God sternly denounces those who lead the people astray: "They have seen false visions and divined a lie. They say, 'Yahweh declares,' when Yahweh has not sent them, and yet they expect the word to be fulfilled . . . Because you have

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[93] The prominence of the recognition formula in Ezekiel may suggest that the deeper problem or root problem of Israel was a false heart-religion, a godlessness which could be defined as a forgetting of Yahweh or a suppression of the knowledge of God. As offensive as Israel's civil and moral transgressions were, they can be interpreted as "shoots" issuing from the "root" of godlessness. To change metaphors, Israel's true malady was the failure to recognize Yahweh. Thus, the recognition formula would seem to point both to a spiritual diagnosis of the nation's ills and to the necessary cure.

[94] We note Ezekiel's use of משפטים to refer variously to the *practices* of the nations, Yahweh's punishing *judgments*, and his holy *ordinances* which God will enable Israel to keep.

spoken worthless lies and seen delusions, I am against you, declares the Lord Yahweh" (13:6, 8). The problem was truly two-fold: false prophets had multiplied and the people liked to listen to lies (13:19; cf. Jer. 5:30-31). The people chose to practice a sort of syncretism, consulting idols and then inquiring of Yahweh (14:7; 20:3). The end result of this habit was a strong curiosity to hear the oracles of Yahweh (from any prophet, false or true), but without any intention to heed the oracles by putting them into practice (33:30-33; cf. Jer. 23:14-40). As Jeremiah also had complained, "no one turns from his wickedness," לבלתי־שבו איש מרעתו (Jer. 23:14).

Ezekiel 16 refers to the gruesome practice of child sacrifice, which characterized the worship of Baal (Jer. 19:5) and especially the cult of Molech. Child sacrifice was one of several historic sins of Judah, according to this chapter. So depraved did Jerusalem become that Ezekiel compares the city unfavorably with Samaria and Sodom (16:46-47). "Samaria did not commit half the sins you did" (16:51)! Ezekiel declares that the apostasy derives from a failure of memory. "You did not remember the days of your youth" (16:22, 43). And what is the meaning of the specific reference to "the days of youth"? Verses 59 to 62 mention "covenant" five times, the holy covenant which Israel had forgotten but Yahweh would remember.

> I shall deal with you according to what you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant . . . And so I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh. (16:59-62)

Here it seems likely that "the days of your youth" is a reference to Israel's stay in, and deliverance from Egypt. As the reader moves on to chapter 23, this interpretation is confirmed. There is no doubt that in Ezekiel's idiom "the days of your youth" *can* refer to the nation's time in Egypt. See the dual references in 23:19-21 and the chiastic parallelism in 23:3a shown below.[95]

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[95] Conclusions drawn from chapters 16 and 23, with their "unsurpassing harshness" (Zimmerli) in recounting Israel's history, should be given full weight by all interpreters of Ezekiel and not dismissed as secondary. At the end of his life, Zimmerli disputed the conclusions of more radical redaction criticism (see the works of Otto Kaiser, Frank Hossfeld, Jörg Garscha, Hermann Schulz) by saying these chapters "are impossible to deny to Ezekiel," *Ezekiel 2*, xv.

ותזנינה במצרים

בנעוריהן זנו

The reference of 16:60 to the covenant made "in the days of your youth" would appear to point to Sinai; this indicates that in Ezekiel's own historical and theological understanding, the covenant is ancient indeed. One may add, for comparison's sake, that the early prophet Hosea equated "the days of her youth" with "the day she came up out of Egypt" (Hosea 2:15 [17]; cf. also Jer. 2:2).[96]

Ezekiel intends to mark a sharp contrast between Israel, whom he indicts with the words, "you did not remember the days of your youth" (16:43), and Yahweh who says, "I shall remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth" (16:60). It seems a good and necessary inference that Israel is being charged with forgetting the covenant, though we do not read that exact language in the text ("you did not remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth"). The covenant violation is described in strong terms: Israel "despised the oath in breaking covenant" (אשר־בזית אלה להפר ברית, 59). The term אלה, commonly translated as "oath,"[97] also carries the idea of a curse; in fact, KB and *HALOT* recommend the translation "curse" for Ezek. 16:59. There is good reason to translate the noun with Greenberg as "curse-oath."[98] Woudstra makes good sense of the text when he writes, "Indeed it may well be that the evil which the prophet is

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[96] This key reference from Hosea was brought to my attention years ago by Professor C. John Collins. Undoubtedly, there is plenty of comparative material for a study of the intertextual relationship between Hosea and Ezekiel. Such a study would be rich indeed, considering how the trope of a "new Exodus" is common to both prophecies. Hosea 2 would be of special interest because of (a) the description of Israel as an adulterous wife; (b) the divine Lover's threat to strip (פשט, hiphil) the adulteress and expose her shame; (c) the promise of a new covenant; (d) the references to the Exodus event; (e) the development of the covenant formula in 2:23 [25]; and (f) the ידע statements which seem to echo the recognition formulae: והיא לא ידעה כי אנכי נתתי לה הדגן (2:8 [10]), and וידעת את־יהוה (2:20 [22]).

[97] See Zimmerli's "Eid" (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 333), which follows the strong German tradition since Luther; NIV; NRSV; ESV; and also BDB. NJPS reads "spurned the pact."

[98] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 291. Marten H. Woudstra says, "The two meanings of the Hebrew אלה are not very far apart. An oath is a conditional form of self-malediction. He who showed no respect for the oath would by implication be also wanting in his respect for the curse which the oath entailed. But since oaths were an essential part of covenant-making, so much so that Mendenhall can rightly say that 'a covenant is essentially a promissory oath' ('Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law,' *BA* 17 [1954]: 28), it follows that the despising of the oath is tantamount to the 'breaking of the covenant.'" See Woudstra, "The Everlasting Covenant in Ezekiel 16:59-63," *CTJ* 6 (1971): 27.

here denouncing is first of all a light-heartedness with respect to the sanctions of the covenant, its oath and its curse. Inevitably this leads to a breaking of the covenant. It is as it were designed to do this."[99]

When comparing chapters 20 and 16, the student of Ezekiel becomes more certain of the prophet's intent in harking back to the earliest days of Israel's sacred history. Ezekiel 20 forms the core of the prophet's argument that Israel had an unbroken history of idolatry. The covenant people "have shown themselves from the very beginning to be a generation infected with heathenism at their very roots."[100] In Egypt God made himself known (ואודע להם בארץ מצרים) to the descendants of Abraham, using the statement "I am Yahweh" (20:5).[101] Even before Yahweh brought the nation out of Egypt, when redemption was still only a promise, Yahweh commanded them to get rid of their vile images and not defile themselves with the idols of Egypt (20:6-7). Because the people did not forsake the idols of Egypt, God considered pouring out his wrath on Israel *in Egypt itself* (20:8). But mercy prevailed, and for the sake of his holy name, Yahweh did bring them out of the house of bondage.

Continuing his rehearsal of Israel's appalling history, Ezekiel tells the story of the nation's rebellion in the desert. There they rejected God's laws "for their hearts were devoted to their idols"—the idols of Egypt (20:16, NIV). Next, Yahweh commanded the second generation,

> Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or follow their rules or defile yourselves with their idols. I am Yahweh your God; walk in my statutes and be careful to follow my laws. And hallow my Sabbaths, that they may be a sign between us. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh your God. (20:18-20)

This second generation also rebelled against Yahweh according to Ezekiel 20:21. Because of this, Yahweh swore an oath (see Leviticus 26:27-45) that Israel would be dispersed

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[99] Ibid., 28.

[100] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 28.

[101] As noted by Lyle Eslinger ("Ezekiel 20 and the Metaphor of Historical Teleology," *JSOT* 81 [1998]: 103), of the Bible's twenty-six instances of ידע in the Niphal stem, only six have Yahweh as the subject. All six are distinctive in describing Yahweh's "self-manifestation through historical intervention." The distribution follows a pattern which Ezekiel scholars recognize as predictable: once in Exod. 6:3; once in Isa. 19:21; and four times in Ezekiel (twice in chapter 20). The motif of divine self-revelation is securely tied to the Exodus narrative.

among the nations "because they had not kept my laws but had rejected my statutes and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols" (20:24).

Turning to the history of Israel in the Promised Land, Ezekiel contends that idolatry became a way of life there too. The prophet recounts how the nation provoked Yahweh with its high places, sacrifices to idols, offerings and incense (20:28). Perhaps one could say that, spiritually, the nation of Israel had never finally left Egypt. She refused to give up the "prostitution she began in Egypt" (23:8, 27). Oehler's *Theology of the Old Testament* makes the point that

> during the stay in Egypt the foundation was laid of the religious syncretism which came up in different forms in the following centuries and which was in general characteristic of Israel, which was never independently productive in polytheistic forms of worship.[102]

Indeed, Ezekiel implies that the former slaves never left Egypt behind (cf. 23:3, 8, 19, 21, 27). Even in exile, Israel's tendency was to continue to "defile yourselves the way your fathers did and lust after their vile images" (20:30-31; cf. 20:1). But Yahweh will not allow the continued idolatry (20:32). Ezekiel promised that the history of the Exodus would be repeated as Yahweh purified the nation through bringing her "into the desert of the nations," judging her there (20:34-38), and finally bringing her back into the land of Israel (20:40-42). In conclusion of Yahweh's argument, Ezekiel's oracle strikes the note of grace. Israel is told, "You shall know that I am Yahweh, when I deal with you for my name's sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt doings" (20:44). The judgment meted out will be corrective and restorative in design.

Chapter 23 refers to this idolatry originally begun Egypt as a "prostitution" (זנה or זנות, vv. 3 [2x], 5, 7, 8, 11 [2x], 14, 18, 19, 27, 29 [2x], 30, 35, 43 [2x]), a "lewdness"

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[102] Gustav F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978 reprint), 99ff. (In the revised translation by George Day [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883], the quote is located on pp. 68-69.) Calvin in his commentary on 20:8 (vol. 2, p. 292) makes a similar point and explains the ease with which Israel adopted the idolatrous practices of Egypt: "It is not surprising then that the children of Israel contracted pollution from the superstitions of Egypt, especially as they lived there as slaves, and were desirous of gratifying the Egyptians: for if they had been treated liberally, they might have lived freely after their custom, but since they were not free and were oppressed as slaves, it happened that they pretended to worship the gods of Egypt according to the will of those by whom they saw themselves oppressed: and not only did they sin by pretending, but it is probable that they were impelled by their own lusts as well as by fear: for it will soon be evident that they were too inclined to impiety of their own accord."

(זמה, vv. 21, 27, 29, 35, 44, 48, 49), or an "adultery" (נאף, vv. 37 [2x], 43, 45). The association of this wanton idolatry with Israel's stay in Egypt is very, very strong; explicit references to מצרים appear six times in chapter 23 (vv. 3, 8, 19, 21, 27 [2x]). Yahweh intends to put a stop to "her prostitution since [her days in] Egypt" (תזנותיה ממצרים, 23:8; cf. 23:19). When God deals with his people, "they shall not remember Egypt anymore" (v. 27). Instead of forgetting Yahweh (23:35; cf. 22:16) and remembering the idols of Egypt, the chastened people will remember Yahweh (6:9) and forget Egypt.

Further help is afforded the reader seeking to understand the historical and religious context in that Ezekiel often identifies the exiles with the entire nation. With this key, one can turn to such sections as the Spirit-given vision of Jerusalem (chapters 8 through 11) and gain significant insight, from the prophet's perspective, into the religious life of the exiles. The apostasy back in the homeland was appalling to Ezekiel, as he envisioned the idol of jealousy in the inner court of Solomon's Temple (8:3-5). He was also permitted to see Israel's elders burning incense before pictures of unclean animals and idols (8:10-12), women sitting at the Temple mourning for Tammuz (8:14), twenty-five men in the inner court bowing down to the rising sun (8:16). Gross idolatry characterized the lives of "old men, young men and maidens, women and children" (9:6). These visions concerned life in the land of Israel prior to the fall of Jerusalem. The practices of those remaining in the land *after* Jerusalem's fall are described in 33:22-29.

Ezekiel 20:32 indicates that the exiles[103] were indeed like the Jews back home in Jerusalem. They said, "Let us be like the nations, like the tribes of [other] lands, who worship wood and stone." This temptation to idolatry must have been strong for them, surrounded as they were by pagan neighbors. This one verse is an excellent key for understanding the background to the incessant refrain. God had always opposed himself to any and all idol-worship with the resounding claim, "I am Yahweh, your God." According

[103] Because 20:31 contains a rebuke from Yahweh which refuses any attempt of the wicked to "inquire of me," and the elders of the exilic community are seeking to make an inquiry in 20:1, it seems most natural to read verse 32 as addressed to an exilic audience which has been scattered among the nations (20:34).

to the perspective in Ezekiel, this pattern is traceable all the way back to the time of the Exodus. We read in 20:5-7,

> And I made myself known to them in Egypt. On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt . . . And I said to them, "Each of you must cast away the detestable things [before] his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. *I am Yahweh your God."*

To serve idols was to profane Yahweh's holy name (Ezekiel 20:39); contrariwise, to worship God truly on his holy mountain was to know him by name as Yahweh (vv. 40-44).[104]

Exodus 20:2-3 is undoubtedly the most obvious, best-known example of the statement, "I am Yahweh," being set in a text proscribing idolatry. But there are many similar texts: e.g., Leviticus 19:4; Psalm 81:9-10. Another instructive passage is Elijah's great challenge to the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.[105] After his opponents had exhausted themselves in asking their god for fire, Elijah intercedes for the covenant people with this magnificent prayer: "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be *known* today that you are God in Israel . . . Answer me, O Yahweh, answer me, so these people will *know* that you, O Yahweh, are God and that you have turned their hearts back again" (1 Kings 18:36-37). Nearly 300 years later, according to the biblical chronology, the Prophet Ezekiel too knew that the conversion of the heart was necessary. The prophet's prayer was that this same people would come to confess with their forefathers that "Yahweh—he is God! Yahweh—he is God!"

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[104] The comparison of Ezekiel's and Jeremiah's theology at this point is most instructive. The "weeping prophet" condemns the false prophets as those "who think that by the dreams they recount they can make my people forget my name, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal [worship]" (23:27). Idolatry, then, is to be equated with forgetting the name Yahweh.

[105] Zimmerli calls this account "particularly valuable" for discussing the recognition event; see *I Am Yahweh*, 67. This is so because the account includes (1) the request for Yahweh to act in order that "these people will know"; (2) the report of the divine act; and (3) a full and graphic depiction of the event's effect, i.e., recognition of Yahweh among his prostrate people.

CHAPTER 6
THE THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE FORMULA AND INTERTEXTUALITY

> In many ways, Ezekiel is the grandfather of intertextual composition, consciously attempting to echo the language of earlier prophetic tradition, deuteronomic themes, priestly concerns, and the cosmic imagery of the temple liturgy. But the book is also very deliberately composed with a narrower "intra-textual" design, in which foreshadowings of later salvational themes in chs. 33–39 are regularly included in earlier judgment warnings (cf. chs. 11, 16, and 20).
>
> – Lawrence Boadt[1]

This chapter will interpret Ezekiel's recognition formula alongside the book of Exodus as an intertext. The argument of this study as a whole is that the two books have such a density of linguistic and theological links, the recognition formula chief among them, that an intertextual reading is not only justified but also necessary. Ezekiel may well be regarded, according to Boadt's suggestion, as "the grandfather of intertextual composition," and the keynote formula may well be understood as an echo of the language of Exodus in some authoritative recension.

Acknowledging the literary, intertextual relationship between Ezekiel and Exodus, while crucial, does not necessarily simplify the task of interpreting the prophet's recognition formula. The research presented in this chapter shows that, while the refrain's usage in Exodus probably guided the prophet in his usage in many particulars, Ezekiel clearly refashions and reinterprets the formula for his own time. There is strong continuity but also jarring discontinuity in Ezekiel's employment of the formula. As mentioned previously, the prophet Ezekiel can both evoke and revoke. The interpreter, then, ought not to regard Ezekiel's formula as a mere transposition from a different time and place (or literary

[1] Lawrence Boadt, review of *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* by Daniel I. Block, *Biblica* 80.1 (1999): 136.

context) with the exact same meaning attached. The clear literary borrowing from Exodus compels the interpreter to study both the similarities and dissimilarities in the usage *and interpretation* of the formula as employed by Exodus and Ezekiel. That study yields the conclusion that, with regard to theological themes and emphases which are contained in or accompany the refrain, continuity is stronger than discontinuity.

From a purely synchronic, intertextual perspective, one would phrase things somewhat differently. There is a dialogue between texts read by the reader, and in the case of Exodus and Ezekiel which have so much in common, the reader hears an involved and extended dialogue with both perceived "disjunctions" and "conjunctions," the latter being more pronounced in this reader's perception. In this chapter which seeks to interpret the recognition formula, the reader may wisely move "from text via text to meaning."[2] The main focus here will be upon a synchronic reading of Ezekiel and Exodus together, but diachronic questions will not be entirely avoided.

A. Theological Disjunction between the Formulae in Ezekiel and Exodus[3]

As has already been emphasized, Ezekiel's recognition formulae have tremendous emotive power because they echo a prominent feature of the story of Israel's redemption with which, the reader may surmise, Ezekiel's audience was familiar. Whether one posits an "intertextuality of text production" or an "intertextuality of text reception,"[4] it is fascinating to "read between" Exodus and Ezekiel with a special focus upon the recognition formulae. As we listen to Exodus and Ezekiel in concert, what do we hear? How do the refrains in Ezekiel echo those in Exodus? Is a clear, strong echo heard, where the accents, the tones, the articulation of a message, in the original voice are recognizable? (Here we are of a diachronic mind with the idea of an originating voice or source.) The refrain as used in Ezekiel, it might be expected, could have much in common with the usage

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[2] Ellen van Wolde, "From Text via Text to Meaning," in *Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1–11*, Biblical Interpretation Series 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 160.

[3] If the interpreter were wanting to pursue a more diachronically oriented approach, say inner-biblical interpretation, one could speak here of "Theological Discontinuity in Ezekiel's Reuse of the Formula."

[4] Ellen van Wolde, "Texts in Dialogue with Texts," 4.

and meaning it has in Exodus. And it does, but there is also a disjunction, one which proved not just counter-intuitive but scandalous to the audience. What caused Ezekiel's formula to be so gripping and awful was the prophecy's "radical inversion of its former usage."[5] As one listens to Ezekiel's recognition formulae in concert with the formulae elsewhere in the Bible, there is discord or dissonance. Nowhere else in all the Bible does the recognition formula appear in an oracle of judgment against Israel. The formula had previously sounded a triumphant, encouraging note: the enemies of God's people would be destroyed, and in that event of divine intervention Israel would be saved and "know that I am Yahweh." Now, however, it is Israel who will be given into the hands of her enemies, and it is she who will know the severe punishment Yahweh brings upon his enemies.

Zimmerli does not make this exact point—that the prophet Ezekiel has departed from the consistently positive use of the recognition formula with relation to Israel elsewhere in the Old Testament—but he does discuss how dreadful the judgment oracles sound for Israel, who likely found it inconceivable that Yahweh could be other than an ally. Zimmerli says that, in the prophetic tradition represented in 1 Kings 20, Yahweh "reveals himself in his actions as the Lord who intervenes on behalf of his people and historically proves his loyalty to Israel."

> However, this picture is severely disturbed and unexpectedly illuminated by the plethora of judgment statements against Israel (Judah) in the first half of this book. Even the prophetic stories from the time of Elijah and Elisha spoke about the judgment of transgressors among the people and even the sinful king. The intensification in Ezekiel is so terrifying because, on the one hand, it has been expanded to include the entire people and its entire political existence; on the other, the recurring direct association of this judgment of Israel with the strict statement of recognition virtually identifies it as the locus at which Yahweh reveals himself in his most personal essence. Yahweh's revelatory self-introduction is to be recognized in his judgment over Israel.[6]

Zimmerli follows von Rad in placing the recognition formulae found in 1 Kings 20 in the context of a "holy war" tradition. Regardless of one's opinions regarding such a distinct tradition,[7] it is clear that in Ezekiel we have a "radical inversion" of the idea that

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[5] Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets*, 39.

[6] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 92-93.

[7] The idea of Yahweh as warrior and as entering battle for Israel is strong in the book of Exodus (14:14, 25 [both alleged to be J/E]; 15:3 [J]; 17:16 [E]).

Yahweh joins battle on the side of his people to grant them victory. At the time of the Exodus, Moses had rallied the Israelites with a prophecy of divine intervention:

> Do not fear. Stand firm and you will see the salvation of Yahweh which he will accomplish for you today. The Egyptians whom you see this day you will not see again, not ever. Yahweh will fight for you; you will keep still. (Exodus 14:13-14)

That prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of the Egyptian charioteers, who cried, "Let us flee from before the Israelites, for Yahweh fights for them against Egypt" (14:25). The nation of Israel at that time was awe-struck and could not contain her joy:

> Who among the gods is like you, Yahweh? Who like you is glorious in holiness, dreadful in praiseworthy deeds, a worker of wonders? *You stretched out Your right arm* (נטית ימינך) and the earth swallowed them. (Exodus 15:11-12)

This was the fulfillment of Yahweh's earlier promise in Exod. 6:6 which is attached to a recognition formula: "I shall bring you out (והוצאתי אתכם) . . . and I shall redeem you with outstretched arm (בזרוע נטויה) and with great judgments."

However, in Ezekiel's oracles (20:33ff.) Yahweh promised a "new exodus" with Yahweh's arm outstretched in wrath and judgment against Israel:

> As I live, declares the Lord Yahweh, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm (בזרוע נטויה) and with outpoured wrath I shall rule over you. I shall bring you out (והוצאתי אתכם) from the peoples and gather you out of the lands among whom you were scattered with a mighty hand and outstretched arm (בזרוע נטויה) and with outpoured wrath. And I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples and I shall judge you there face to face.

The "radical inversion" of the Exodus language is stunning, and as one examines the oracles more closely the reader finds further examples of this inversion.

The same type of revisionary re-use with even harsher language occurs where Ezekiel speaks of Yahweh's "hand" (also seen in the text from chapter 20 above). Exodus has many texts which declare that Yahweh will extend his hand against Egypt (3:20; 7:4, 5; 9:3, 15; 13:3, 9, 14, 16; cf. 32:11). Indeed, Exodus says that the willful Pharaoh, who does not know Yahweh (5:2), will not let the children of Israel go unless compelled by Yahweh's hand (3:19). The hand of Yahweh is against Pharaoh but not against Israel's leaders in Exodus 24:11 (ואל־אצילי בני ישראל לא שלח ידו), who are spared judgment when they have a covenant meal with a holy God. Ezekiel, however, inverts this language in his oracles against Israel: "I shall stretch out my hand against them (ונטיתי את־ידי על־יהם)

and make the land a desolation and waste . . . Then they shall know that I am Yahweh" (6:14).[8] Ezekiel envisages a war of Yahweh against his people. Instead of Egyptian dead lying on the seashore (Exod. 14:30), the dead bodies of Israelites will lie in front of their idols (Ezek. 6:5). The prophet says, "The slain shall fall among you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh" (6:7).

The book of Jeremiah also contains this stunning reversal of the "Divine Warrior" motif, though without the recognition formula. When messengers are sent by the king to inquire of Yahweh regarding the outcome of Judah's war with Nebuchadnezzar, they receive this answer (21:4-6):

> Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: See, I shall turn back against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, [weapons] with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and the Babylonians who are besieging you outside the wall. And I will bring them inside this city. *I myself will fight against you* with an outstretched hand and a strong arm (ביד נטויה ובזרוע חזקה) in anger and fury and great wrath. *I will strike down* the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast, and they shall die of a great plague.[9]

The inversion of Exodus' wholly positive use of the recognition formula in a majority of Ezekiel's formulae addressed to Israel is highly significant as another facet of this overall pattern of "skewing" previously positive language.[10] In this one matter of a negative vs. positive context for the use of the recognition formula, Isaiah's recognition formulae are more similar to Exodus' than are Ezekiel's. The distinction in usage of the formula is a prime reason to reject the idea of Ezekiel's formulae deriving from so-called Second Isaiah

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[8] Since the phrases "stretch out the hand" and "stretch out the arm" are a common idiom throughout the Old Testament, one need not *necessarily* view Ezekiel's use of the phrase as being closely tied to Exodus. Exodus repeatedly uses נטה in these phrases to describe both divine action (Exod 6:6; 7:5; 15:12) and Moses' and Aaron's action (Exod 7:19; 8:5 [1]; 9:22; 10:12, 21; 14:16, 26, and elsewhere). In two places Exodus uses the verb שלח with the same meaning (Exod 3:20; 9:15). What is significant in Ezekiel is the radical inversion of this language, together with the recognition formula, using it to describe divine action in oracles of judgment *against Israel* (See Ezek. 6:14; 14:9, 13; 16:27; 25:7, 13; 35:3), in addition to oracles against the nations (e.g., Ezek. 25:16). Greenberg writes (in a quote we have noted before), "Ezekiel characteristically utilizes a traditional phrase with a shocking twist: in the new Exodus the ferocity that tradition asserted was unleashed upon Egypt in the old one will be turned against rebellious Israel in order to force it finally to accept what it never had before—God's kingship over it in the land he chose for it." (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 372). In passing we note Isaiah's use of this same phrase in judgment oracles (9:11, 16, 20; 10:4

[9] This Jeremiah text, and verse 5 in particular, is cited by Greenberg who says that "Jeremiah partly anticipated Ezekiel in this skewed usage" (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 372).

[10] Out of the 46 formulae addressed to Israel, 30 are found in oracles of judgment.

(*pace* Blank, May), whose use of the refrain is wholly positive, whether it is addressed to Israel or the *gôyîm*.

Because the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophetic calling necessitated faithful interpretation of Scripture, one may question how the prophet understood the tension between Exodus and his own oracles. Might there have been any level of unease over the appropriateness of the "radical inversion"? This student of Ezekiel must answer that question in the negative for several reasons.

First, the prophet presents the judgment oracles as coming from God, seemingly with complete faith that his oracles carried absolute divine authority. The reader sees this in Ezekiel's repeated use of the introductory phrases, "the word of Yahweh came to me," "thus says Yahweh," and "hear the word of Yahweh";[11] there is also the constant use of certain concluding phrases which highlight the divine origin of the oracles ("the utterance of Yahweh," and "I, Yahweh, have spoken").[12] That is, in Ezekiel's theocentric orientation the radical inversion is authored by Yahweh, not the prophet.

Secondly, while the book of Exodus contains no recognition formulae set in judgment oracles *against Israel*, Yahweh reportedly did judge his people in terrible ways at the time of the Exodus. Ezekiel argues in 20:36 that his theme of judgment against Israel did have its precedent in Exodus. The prophet writes, "As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I shall judge you, says the Lord Yahweh." The testimony of Scripture is that Israel *had* experienced certain plagues in Egypt (Exod. 7:14 – 8:19) and other judgments in the Wilderness (Exod. 32:25-29, 35; Lev. 10; etc.). Their wickedness[13] was

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[11] The so-called "prophetic word formula" or "word-event formula," ויהי דבר־יהוה אלי לאמר, occurs over fifty times and is said by Zimmerli to demarcate separate oracles. The "messenger formula," כה אמר (אדני) יהוה, is also extensively used in Ezekiel, occurring about 125 times. The phrase, "hear the word of Lord Yahweh" (שמעו דבר־אדני יהוה), sometimes termed the "call to attention formula" (Hals, *Ezekiel*, 359), can appear alongside the messenger formula (e.g., 6:3). There are some ten occurrences in Ezekiel.

[12] The so-called "prophetic utterance formula" (Hals, *Ezekiel*, 361) or, even better, "signatory formula" (Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 33), נאם אדני יהוה, appears about 85 times in Ezekiel and is discussed in detail by Friedrich Baumgärtel, "Die Formel *n^{e}'um jahwe*," *ZAW* 73 (1961): 277-90. The "conclusion formula for divine speech" (already mentioned in chapter 3 above), אני יהוה דברתי, is found approximately fifteen times, occasionally in conjunction with the recognition formula.

[13] The book of Exodus makes reference to the nation of Israel as "stiff-necked" (32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9); having corrupted themselves (32:7); being "prone to evil" (32:22); testing and grumbling against Yahweh

such, during the period Ezekiel described as "the days of your youth," that Yahweh had threatened to consume (כלה) the nation in his anger (Exod. 32:10, 12; 33:3, 5; cf. Ezek. 20:13).[14]

We may note a third reason. Immediately after the deliverance from Egypt, when Moses exhorts the redeemed people to follow in the ways of Yahweh, there seems to be both a promise of mercy and a latent threat in Moses' speech recorded in Exod. 15:26:

> If you truly listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, and do what is right in his eyes, and heed his commandments, and keep all of his requirements, then all the diseases I brought upon the Egyptians I will not bring upon you, for I am Yahweh your healer.

But what if the nation in future years does *not* "truly listen to the voice of Yahweh . . . and do what is right in his eyes, and heed his commandments"? Is there the implication that "all the diseases I brought upon the Egyptians" might, at a later time and in God's judgment, be visited upon Israel?

The fourth reason depends upon a well-known and clear text in Exodus which is as important as any in the Bible for understanding the biblical significance and meaning of the name Yahweh. Exodus 34:5 records that Yahweh came down to Moses on Mount Sinai and "called out the name Yahweh."[15] Then in the following two verses there is an additional double declaration of the name with what seems to be a divine exposition of the name.[16]

> (6) And Yahweh passed before him and called out, "Yahweh, Yahweh, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in covenant-love[17] and faithfulness, (7) maintaining covenant-love for thousands, and forgiving guilt and

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(16:8; 17:7); breaking the Sabbath command (16:28); and needing an atonement for their sin (32:30; 34:9). Thus, the book of Exodus presents no idyllic picture of Israel's spiritual and moral state in the beginning.

[14] There is a multiplicity of threats in Exodus against Israel. Israel was solemnly warned to keep God's command not to approach Mt. Sinai, otherwise "Yahweh will break out against them" (Exod. 19:22, 24). Exodus 32:34 reads, "But in the day of my visitation I shall visit vengeance upon them for their sin." There was also Yahweh's warning that he would withdraw his presence from the people (33:3-5).

[15] With most scholars and translators, this study reads the last two verbs in verse 5, ויתיצב and ויקרא, with Yahweh as the subject. See Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 439; Childs, *Exodus*, 603, 611-12; Durham, *Exodus*, 453; Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 3: Exodus 20–40, trans. Sierd Woudstra, HCOT (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 707.

[16] Durham agrees and writes (*Exodus*, 454), "Yahweh's confession of his nature is a powerful exegesis of the meaning of 'Yahweh! Yahweh!,' one brilliantly matched to (or by) the narrative of which it is a part and one that summarizes dramatically that Yahweh will not accommodate his nature to the vagaries of his people's commitment."

[17] Following Nelson Glueck, *Ḥesed in the Bible*, trans. Alfred Gottschalk (KTAV, 1975).

> rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave them unpunished, visiting the sin of the fathers upon the children and grandchildren, to three and four generations.

Verse 7b disperses all illusions that Yahweh will never judge his people. On the positive side, this covenant text (see v. 10) establishes that Yahweh intends to pour out an abundance of love upon his chosen people. And they can expect to see Yahweh work unparalleled wonders in the future, wonders which convince surrounding nations of Yahweh's awesome power on behalf of Israel. But on the negative side, the covenant renewal in chapter 34—made necessary by the covenant violation with the Golden Calf—also offers stern warnings. Yahweh's name is "Jealous" (v. 14), and he will certainly not clear the guilty. The sin especially in view is any covenant with the peoples in the land God will give them (vv. 12-16), for such a treaty will lead Israel into the worship of other gods, a worship characterized by Yahweh as spiritual "prostitution" (זנה, vv. 15-16).

In an intertextuality of text reception, one might read backward in the biblical canon, from Ezekiel to Exodus, and discover in Exodus (through Ezekiel) a certain "potential" latent in the recognition formula for a negative use.[18] Coming to know Yahweh, Lord of the covenant, can occur in judgment as well as in salvation, and Israel may "know that I am Yahweh" in a broader situational context than deliverance from her enemies. One ponders, if Yahweh may make himself known to Egypt through acts of judgment, is it unthinkable that he might reveal himself to Israel in judgment when the nation has for generations violated the covenant? Is it inconceivable for Yahweh to display to the rebellious what one of my students termed "the other side of his power,"[19] that they may "know that I am Yahweh"?

It may be suggested that Ezekiel's "radical inversion" of the recognition formula was more shocking to his audience than to the prophet. Also, that inversion follows Ezekiel's pattern, noted earlier in this study,[20] of what Walther Zimmerli might have termed a negative

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[18] If the interpreter rejects the idea of such a negative curse/judgment "potential," one might at least understand the language of Exodus 15:26, and of similar texts such as 23:22, as permitting and even threatening the withdrawal of positive benefits (e.g., protection) where the people rebel.

[19] Harold Kazekula, student paper, Theological College of Central Africa, 2000.

[20] See chapter 4, section A.3.

reactualization of tradition. Zimmerli has prompted Ezekiel scholarship to think hard about the relation of Ezekiel's message to the older theological *traditum* (as he calls it) and about what transformation occurs in the re-use of the *traditum.* He writes,

> For all of this, is it appropriate to speak of "interpretation" of historical traditions? To be sure, old traditions emerge throughout. Yet in terms of the actual function which "tradition" should serve, namely, the function of wholesome assurance for the present in "memory" and in "actualization" of past events, the *traditum* crumbles to pieces wherever the great pre-exilic prophets take hold of it. In their preaching it becomes the accuser of the present. And even at the price sometimes (especially in Ezekiel) of radical recasting with all beneficial aid eliminated, the *traditum* is made to serve entirely the prophets' immediate proclamation of judgment, the sole locus of emphasis. The God who comes in judgment emerges from the entire pious tradition. He is to be known in his impending judgment, and no longer in tradition about previous deeds ('*Erweiswort*'). Alongside this, the old traditions have nothing of their own to emphasize. "Tradition," in the salutary sense of the word, shatters and becomes an empty shell of mere historical recollection, over which a completely different word of God is proclaimed.[21]

Zimmerli certainly has an important point to make here, but perhaps he has overstated his case. Have the "traditions" completely crumbled or shattered, if they are re-used by Ezekiel in oracles of salvation, as well as in oracles of judgment? (E.g., Ezekiel prophesies that Yahweh will graciously lead Israel in a new Exodus back to the land of their "fathers" [20:41f.] after he has led them by a new Exodus to know his judgment [20:34-38].) There is need to see the conjunctions (or continuities), alongside the shattering disjunctions (or discontinuities).

B. Theological Conjunctions between the Formulae in Ezekiel and Exodus[22]

In chapter four of this dissertation it was shown that Exodus and Ezekiel have numerous points of contact. Evidence was adduced to show that Ezekiel drew the recognition formula from Exodus as well. Therefore, it may be supposed that the interpretation of the refrain in both books will also have points of contact, and this supposition is correct. Fuller meaning in the formula and several conjunctions are discovered through an intertextual reading of Ezekiel and Exodus.

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[21] Zimmerli, "Prophetic Proclamation," 98-99.

[22] Again, if the interpreter were wanting to pursue a more diachronically oriented approach, say inner-biblical interpretation, one could speak here of "Theological Continuity in Ezekiel's Reuse of the Formula."

1. No Positive Use Of The Formula When Spoken To The Nations

If "in modern scholarship there is a lack of consensus regarding Deutero-Isaiah's conception of the relationship of the nations to Yahweh and to Israel,"[23] with some believing the prophet envisaged the full salvation of the nations alongside Israel and others arguing that there is no Isaianic expectation of Gentile salvation, one should anticipate debate over the same topic in Ezekiel studies as well. There has indeed been vigorous debate. Are chapters 25–32 in fact oracles *against* the nations, to be read in a wholly negative way? Because the recognition formulae are addressed to the nations as well as Israel, the question arises as to whether the *gôyîm* will "know that I am Yahweh" in the same sense that Israel will. Some scholars, Reventlow prominent among them, hold that Ezekiel's prophecies do expect the conversion of the nations and Yahweh's blessing upon them,[24] while others contest such an interpretation.[25] Currently, there is a strong trend among Ezekiel specialists to view the prophecy as more exclusivistic than inclusivistic in theology and missional focus. The direction of scholarship, then, would be to interpret the recognition formulae addressed to the nations as *not* having saving "knowledge" in view.

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[23] D. W. Van Winkle, "The Relationship of the Nations to Yahweh and to Israel in Isaiah XL-LV," *VT* 35.4 (1985): 446. This article summarizes the author's Ph.D. dissertation of the same title for Cambridge University (1982).

[24] See Zimmerli, "The Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel," in *I Am Yahweh*, 29-98, especially 88-90; Henning Graf Reventlow, "Die Völker als Jahwes Zeugen bei Ezechiel," *ZAW* 71 (1959): 33-43; idem, *Wächter über Israel*, 134-57 (esp. 138); Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. II, 237; Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 115-17; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 44-45, 586; Walter Vogels, "Restauration de l'Égypt et universalisme en Ez 29,13-16," *Biblica* 53 (1972): 473-94; Elmer A. Martens, "Ezekiel's Contribution to a Biblical Theology of Mission," *Direction* 28.1 (1999): 75-87 (also available from http://www.directionjournal.org/article/?1003 [accessed 1 October 2005]); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 37-38, 255-72. Wright builds upon the work of his student D. A. Williams: "'Then They Will Know that I Am the Lord': The Missiological Significance of Ezekiel's Concern for the Nations as Evident in the Use of the Recognition Formula," (M.A. thesis, All Nations Christian College [Ware, UK], 1998).

[25] Keil, *The Prophecies of Ezekiel*, 1:358; Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel*, xxxi; Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 446; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 66; Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, "The Wall around Paradise: Ezekielian Ideas about the Future," *VT* 37.3 (1987): 271-79; Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 90, 94-97; Strong, "Ezekiel's Use of the Recognition Formula"; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 53; idem, "Ezekiel: Theology of," in *NIDOTTE*, 4: 618-19. One has recently argued that Ezekiel's oracles take such a "dim view" of even Israel's future with Yahweh that they can hardly be said to promise salvation or grace to the covenant people; see Baruch J. Schwartz, "Ezekiel's Dim View of Israel's Restoration," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, 43-67.

Zimmerli's position in this controversy is not easy to discern.[26] In a number of places his writings seem to encourage the view that Ezekiel's recognition formulae anticipate the conversion of the nations. As has been explained in chapter two above, Zimmerli's form-critical approach understands the recognition formula as consisting of two parts: the "assertion/statement of recognition" (*Erkenntnisaussage*),[27] and the "formula of self-introduction" (*Selbstvorstellungsformel*). The latter (אני יהוה) is supposed to have had originally a cultic setting and to have served as the "personal self-introduction of the attendant God"[28] in worship. The logical next step for Zimmerli is to interpret the recognition formula as anticipating a worshipful response to "word-event." He speaks of "the knowledge of God coming about in the worshiping confession, Yahweh is God (1 Kings 18)," and "the adoration that kneels because of divinely inspired recognition, an orientation toward the one who himself says 'I am Yahweh.'" In the same paragraph of his 1954 essay, Zimmerli asserts, "This same recognition is expected from the rest of the world's nations. In this Ezekiel is similar to Deutero-Isaiah."[29]

The "Introduction" to Zimmerli's commentary appears to contradict this theological conclusion. There he both distances his own position from Reventlow's and distinguishes between Ezekiel's and Deutero-Isaiah's outlook on the nations' future. Zimmerli mentions "the future age of *Israel's* salvation which is announced," and then he writes,

> The message of the prophet Ezekiel *lacks a completely universal interest.* "The nations" can sometimes (mostly in sayings from the school) be mentioned in the Recognition Formula as witnesses (36:23; 37:28; 38:16; 39:7, 21, 23). *Unlike Deutero-Isaiah*, the prophet of the late exilic age, Ezekiel lacks a fully-developed message about the world of the nations.[30]

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[26] Martens claims Zimmerli for his view—long associated with Reventlow—that ידע in the formula includes an "adoration" of Yahweh ("Ezekiel's Contribution," 76), while Darr believes Zimmerli "departs from this view" held by Reventlow ("The Wall around Paradise," 272).

[27] Zimmerli can use "statement of recognition" in a rather broad sense (even as a synonym for "recognition formula"). We note here that he terms ידע כי, which is the first element in the recognition formula, "die Erkenntnisaussage im engeren Sinne" (*Gottes Offenbarung*, 90).

[28] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 26.

[29] Ibid., 88. The last words of Zimmerli's essay expand on this theme by mentioning "confession, worship, and obedience" (98).

[30] *Ezekiel 1*, p. 66 (*Ezechiel*, BK XIII/1, 101*-102*), emphasis added. The word "completely" in the ET is both unnecessary and possibly misleading (modifying "universal"). The original reads simply, "Das universale Interesse fehlt der Verkündigung des Propheten Ezechiel."

The "Introduction," written at the conclusion of his commentary work, more than a decade after the programmatic essays of the 1950s, represents the more mature views of the scholar. Zimmerli did not agree with Reventlow. At the same time, it is doubtful that he would ever have asserted his disagreement in strong terms, as is common today among Ezekiel specialists.

Among those who lean toward an inclusive interpretation of Ezekiel's theology, there is a widespread tendency to understand all the recognition formulae in Ezekiel as having essentially the same content and meaning, whether spoken to Israel or to the nations, whether in prophecies of judgment or salvation. What Israel comes to "know," the nations will also "know." What it means "to know" remains fairly constant and uniform. One finds this interpretation in both critical and conservative scholarship. Among several on the more critical side, Klaus Koch may be quoted:

> Knowing that Yahweh *is* means recognizing him as the One who, in any event, will ultimately prevail. The act of human knowledge does not merely imply theoretical insight. It involves modified behaviour as well; for the Hebrew word for knowing, *yada*ʿ, does not mean objective and detached observation. It means arriving at an understanding of something through use and association. In Ezekiel, this knowledge does not become the common property of eschatological Israel alone. It is given to the other nations as well (36.36 . . .).[31]

Koch is a careful scholar and has expressed his conclusion in a well-nuanced way which is agreeable in most every respect. One may raise questions, however, when he writes of a knowledge of Yahweh which involves something like repentance ("modified behavior") on the part of the nations as well as Israel. Does Ezekiel 25:7 lead us to expect that Ammon will behave differently in coming to know a wrathful Yahweh? The oracle reads: "I shall cut you off from the peoples, and I shall exterminate (אבד, hiphil) you from the countries. I shall destroy (שׁמד, hiphil) you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh."

The conservative work of my former professor, Gerard Van Groningen, on *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* also reflects this tendency to interpret the content of "knowledge" (or the result of "knowing") as much the same, whether the recognition formula is addressed to Israel or the nations, whether in oracles of judgment or salvation. He writes,

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[31] Klaus Koch, *The Prophets*, vol. 2, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 105.

> . . . [T]he covenant people would come to a realization that when Yahweh spoke, "I am Yahweh" and "You shall know that I am Yahweh," he meant exactly that! Not only were his dealings with Israel and Judah in exile to realize that truth, *but Yahweh's dealings with other nations were to have them come to know and acknowledge that Yahweh is the only God.* . . . Thus the particular *and universal* dimensions of Yahweh's covenantal relationships were at the very heart of the exile."[32]

Such scholars are applying one sound hermeneutical principle, namely, that *an author not uncommonly uses terms and phrases in much the same fashion when they are repeated within a single document.* We tend to believe that key terms or phrases occurring repeatedly in a larger text will be fairly consistent in meaning, and we wish to read them together and to take cues from the larger context in interpreting the "parallels." For example, we might expect that the meaning of the "Day of Yahweh" phrase in Joel 3:14 [MT 4:14] will be much in line with that of the earlier occurrences in the prophecy (1:15; 2:1, 11; 2:31 [MT 3:4]).[33] By use of this principle, one might naturally deduce that, in Ezekiel's recognition formulae, Israel and the nations both will "know" in the same way. If the recognition of Yahweh by Israel is God's grace and means salvation (e.g., at 36:38), then the recognition of Yahweh by the nations may mean salvation, too. Because of the strong covenantal overtones in the recognition formula, it is thought by some that the formulae spoken to the nations indicate God's covenantal interest in the nations.

There is another hermeneutical principle, however, which must be taken into account. The Cambridge New Testament scholar, C. F. D. Moule, instructed his students "that statements may vary strikingly in emphasis as a result of the very different circumstances to which they were severally addressed."[34] There is need, then, to balance a concept/lexeme-oriented approach with a field-oriented approach, which seeks to understand how "the situational and semantic context modulates the sense of included lexical units."[35] When

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[32] Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 733. Emphasis added.

[33] For an in-depth study of Joel's use of the "day of Yahweh" motif, weighted more toward a diachronic approach, see Martin Beck's *Habilitationsschrift* at Erlangen-Nürnberg, *Der "Tag YHWHs" im Dodeka-propheton*, BZAW 356 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 140-201.

[34] James D. G. Dunn, review of *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, volume 1: *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, edited by D. A. Carson, *et al.*, *TJ* 25.1 (2004): 113.

[35] Peter Cotterell, and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989), 147.

situational, rhetorical, and literary context are examined, it becomes clear that occurrences of the lexeme *νομος* in Paul, or of the phrase *η βασιλεια του θεου* in the Gospels, or of ידע in Ezekiel's prophecy can have different senses, and we are bound to give close scrutiny to the context. The student of Ezekiel ought to apply this hermeneutical principle in studying the recognition formula.

Does ידע "vary strikingly" in its meaning, depending on the context, or does it have a fairly consistent and generalized meaning in Ezekiel's recognition formulae, addressed to both Israel and the nations? Before examining relevant texts in Ezekiel we might propose a thesis to be tested: reading the book of Exodus as an intertext, with its recognition formulae addressing both Israel and a foreign nation, may illuminate the study of Ezekiel's formulae on this point. Do we hear echoes of the word in Exodus?

A careful reading of Exodus leads to the conclusion that there are two distinct kinds of knowledge implied by the recognition formulae there. The knowledge of Yahweh attained by Egypt in judgment was of a completely different order than that attained by Israel in their experience of a gracious redemption. It seems impossible to interpret the formulae spoken to Israel[36] in Exodus 6:5-7 and to Egypt[37] in Exodus 7:3-5 in the same way, that is, as having the same kind of "knowledge" in view.[38] Israel is to see Yahweh's gracious plan

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[36]"I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the sons of Israel: 'I am Yahweh, and I will take you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will free you from their labors, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment/vindication. And I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who took you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.' "

[37] "And I shall harden Pharaoh's heart, and I shall multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and I shall bring out my divisions, my people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the sons of Israel out from the midst of them."

[38]There are some who have tried to interpret these formulae in Exodus the same way. Victor P. Hamilton writes in *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 164-65: "The divine purpose is that the Pharaoh and his people—to say nothing of the Israelites—will indeed acquire knowledge of the true God. It will be a knowledge based on observation and confrontation and not on hearsay. To know the Lord as Lord means to recognize and then submit to his authority. This is the choice the Pharaoh needs to make and is invited to make." The book of Exodus makes clear that Pharaoh did not submit to the authority of Yahweh, even after the plague on the firstborn. Instead, Pharaoh and his advisers chose to chase after Israel in order to enslave them again (Exod 14:1-9). There seems to be some inconsistency in Hamilton's quote above. He first states that Yahweh's purpose is that Pharaoh "will *indeed* acquire knowledge of the true God" and "submit" (repent?). However, he then backs away and makes it a "choice Pharaoh . . . is invited to make."

fulfilled in her redemption from slavery and in Yahweh's presence coming to dwell with the covenant people. They come to "fear" Yahweh and "put their trust" (אמן hiphil) in him and his prophet (14:31). However, the story is different with an Egypt that "knows."

Rather than revealing a disposition to be known by a humbled Egypt in his grace and mercy, Yahweh declares that he will harden the hearts of the Egyptians (14:17) that they might resist him to the point of being utterly broken in destruction. It is in Egypt's final destruction that Yahweh will be known, when Pharaoh's charioteers cry out, moments before being engulfed, "Let us flee from before the Israelites for Yahweh fights for them against Egypt" (14:25). The Exodus narrative reveals Yahweh's intention to destroy human lives as a judgment (14:17); therefore, according to the divine perspective and purpose, one is mistaken to say with William Propp that "Egypt has learned *too late* the lesson of the Plagues, that 'I am Yahweh.'"[39] In the plan of Yahweh as described in the narrative, it was at just the right time. The glory of Yahweh is revealed, not in Egypt's willing submission to the God of Israel, but in Yahweh hardening Pharaoh's heart that the latter might pursue his cruel scheme to re-enslave Israel (14:4) and find destruction. "Then the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh," in a very different sense than Israel "knows."[40] For the former, Botterweck says, it is "a painful and helpless surprise (*leidvolle und ohnmächtige Betroffenheit*)."[41] This negative perspective on the nations as awed but unconverted observers of Yahweh's mighty acts for Israel, carries over into Exodus 15. Among hostile nations (15:9)— many of the same nations mentioned in Ezekiel —Israel sings in 15:11-17,

> Who among the gods is like you, Yahweh?
> Who like you is glorious (אדר Niphal) in holiness,
> dreadful in praiseworthy deeds (תהלות), a worker of wonders?
> You extended your right arm,
> and the earth swallowed them.
> In your covenant mercy (חסד) you lead
> the people you have redeemed.
> In your might you lead them

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[39] William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 500.

[40] The Exodus texts containing recognition formulae spoken against Egypt, besides 7:3-5 which was quoted above, have a similarly severe tone and contain harsh judgment against Israel's oppressors. Those texts are Exodus 7:17 (the plague of blood); and 8:22 (Yahweh spares Israel while he plagues Egypt again). Cf. the phrases related to the formula in 8:10; 9:14, 29; and 11:7.

[41] G. Johannes Botterweck, "ידע *yāḏaʿ*," *TDOT*, vol. 5: 473.

to your holy dwelling place.
The nations hear; they shudder;
dread seizes the inhabitants of Philistia.
Then Edom's chiefs are terrified;
[as for] the "rams" [strong men] of Moab, trembling seizes them;
all the inhabitants of Canaan melt away (מוג).
Fear and terror fall upon them.
By the greatness of your arm
they are still as a stone,
until your people pass by, Yahweh,
until the people you have acquired (קנה)[42] pass by.
You bring them and plant them
on the mountain of your inheritance,
the place you make into your dwelling, Yahweh,
the sanctuary, Lord, your hands establish (כון Polel).

Israel's consolation amid the surrounding hostile nations was to be in Yahweh's promise, "I shall be an enemy to your enemies" (Exod. 23:22). The expectation, then, is that Egypt, Edom, Moab, and the rest would know Yahweh in his hostility to all Israel's foes.

As with the recognition formulae in Exodus, it seems wise to differentiate between Ezekiel's formulae and not assume that ידע in the prophet's refrains should be construed the same way, whether the formula addresses Israel in *Heilsankündigung* or the nations in *Gerichtsankündigung*. We propose that what *should* be construed in much the same way is the "knowledge" connoted in Ezekiel's recognition formulae which occur in judgment oracles against Israel and against the nations. The kinds of "knowledge" connoted by the recognition formula do not differ according to addressee (Israel will "know" in one sense and the nations in another) but according to oracle-type (the judged will "know" in one sense and the redeemed in another). We will proceed by examining, first of all, where the knowledge connoted by Ezekiel's recognition formulae differs, and secondly, where the knowledge connoted by Ezekiel's formulae is similar.

a. Construing the Knowledge Connoted by the Formula Differently

As was noted in chapter three above, approximately 75% of the recognition formulae in Ezekiel occur in prophecies of judgment, and the remaining formulae occur in prophecies of mercy and restoration addressed to Israel. Yahweh promises, "I shall establish my covenant

[42] Some wish to translate קנה as "create" instead of "purchase" or "acquire." See the commentary of Durham (*Exodus*, 200, 202) and KB (843). *HALOT* suggests "acquire" (1112).

with you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh" (16:62; cf. 34:25; 37:26). God also purposes to be known in his mercy as he returns his people to their own land: "You shall know that I am Yahweh when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country which I swore [lit. raised my hand] to give to your fathers" (20:42; cf. 36:8, 24; 37:12, 14, 21, 25; 38:8; 39:25-28). The restoration will be like a national resurrection (37:1-14): ". . . I shall put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am Yahweh" (37:6). The blessings of restoration will include: atonement for Israel's sin (16:63); cleansing from defilement and idolatry (36:25, 29, 33); inward spiritual renewal (36:26); rescue from slavery (34:27); protection from selfish rulers (34:10) and enemies (34:28; 38:8; 39:26) and wild animals (34:25, 28); Yahweh's fierce judgment upon attacking enemies (38:21-23); abundant harvests (34:27; 36:8, 29-30, 34-36); the multiplication of Israel's population and livestock (ורבו ופרו, 36:10-11, 37-38); rebuilt cities (36:34-36); the removal of neighbors' scorn (36:15, 30); a new David to rule as king (34:23; 37:24-24); Yahweh's shepherding care (34:11ff.); and the re-establishment of Yahweh's dwelling among his people (34:30; 37:26-28), which a Christian interpreter may link to the bestowal upon Israel of God's Spirit (36:27; 37:14; 39:29). The fullness of God's blessing may be summed up in the covenant formula: "you will be my people, and I will be your God" (36:28; 37:23, 27).[43] Israel will know and trust Yahweh as her saving God.

Ezekiel prophecies to the nations contain no promises of salvation or blessing similar to those above. Only doom and woe (together with awe in observing Yahweh's blessing upon Israel) are prophesied to the nations. Ezekiel's word to the nations is "See, I am against you" (הנני אליך, 26:3; 28:22; 29:3, 10; 35:3; 38:3; 39:1).[44] There is nothing in Ezekiel similar to Isaiah's oracle that the Egyptians will "swear allegiance to Yahweh Sebaoth" (19:18), "build an altar to worship Yahweh in the midst of Egypt" (v. 19), "turn to Yahweh" (v. 22), and hear "Yahweh Sebaoth saying, 'Blessed be my people Egypt'" (v.

[43] For a more recent discussion of this formula, see Rolf Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation.*

[44] These texts are matched by a number which address the wicked of Israel (13:8; 21:8; 34:10). The contrast would be a text speaking blessing such as 36:9: כי הנני אליכם ופניתי אליכם, which Block says, "recalls Yahweh's covenant promise in Lev. 26:9, 'I will turn to you *(ûpānîtî ʾălêkem)* and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm my covenant with you" (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, p. 333).

25). With no oracles of salvation addressed to the nations, one might guess that there will be no recognition formulae addressed to the nations which speak of them "knowing" Yahweh in deliverance and blessing. This supposition is confirmed to be true by a careful reading of the book of Ezekiel and by the best scholarship—see Joyce's catalog of all the formulae in Ezekiel (Table 1). Not a single recognition formula is spoken positively to the nations in all of Ezekiel's prophecy. Even those who believe that Ezekiel anticipates some future blessing upon the nations admit this fact. In his fine expositional commentary, Wright admits,

> It has to be said, however, that all the texts which apply the recognition formula to the nations (as distinct from Israel) do so either in relation to anticipated punishment of the nations in the oracles directed against them, or in relation to the predicted restoration of Israel in their midst. There is no clear text that expresses the expectation that the nations would know Yahweh as a result of his delivering or saving *them* in any way that parallels the deliverance of Israel.[45]

A sharp distinction can and should be made between the "knowledge" connoted by Ezekiel's recognition formulae (with their variations) addressed to the nations and the "knowledge" connoted by formulae in oracles of salvation spoken to Israel. Those who are judged know Yahweh in a different sense than those who are saved, and the formulae included in oracles of restoration spoken to Israel have less bearing upon the interpretation of formulae spoken to the nations. It appears to be a misreading to interpret in a salvific sense those formulae in Ezekiel which say the nations "shall know that I am Yahweh"; they should be read differently from a text such as Isaiah 19:21:

> And Yahweh shall make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh (וידעו מצרים את־יהוה) in that day and worship with sacrifice and offering. They shall make vows to Yahweh and perform them.

Contrary to views of Reventlow and others, the recognition formulae in Ezekiel do not lead the reader to expect the nations either to trust in Yahweh and repent, or to experience covenantal blessing.

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[45] Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*, 37. Those pressing this conclusion most insistently would be Darr, "The Wall around Paradise," Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, and Strong, "Ezekiel's Use of the Recognition Formula."

b. Construing the Knowledge Connoted by the Formula Similarly

Though the oracles of salvation spoken to Israel and the oracles of judgment against the nations are not so comparable, with regard to the kind of "knowledge" connoted by Ezekiel's recognition formula, the judgment oracles against Israel and the nations are. This doctoral research concludes that the recognition formulae found in judgment oracles against the nations are best interpreted alongside, and in basic accord with, formulae spoken in judgment against Israel. The reverse also seems true: the recognition formulae in judgment oracles against Israel may be well interpreted alongside the formulae spoken in judgment against the nations. The oracles of judgment in Ezekiel often read in a similar way, and here, to give one example,[46] we might compare 6:14 and 33:29 (Israel) with 29:9 (Egypt) and 35:3-4 (Mt. Seir):

> 6:14 — And I shall stretch out my hand against them and make the land desolate (שְׁמָמָה) and a waste (וּמִשְׁמָּה) from the wilderness to Diblah throughout all their settlements. And then they shall know that I am Yahweh.
>
> 33:29 — And they shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have made the land a desolation (שְׁמָמָה) and a waste (וּמִשְׁמָּה) because of all their abominations which they have done.
>
> 29:9 — And the land of Egypt shall be a desolation (שְׁמָמָה) and a waste (וְחָרְבָה). And then they shall know that I am Yahweh.
>
> 35:3-4 — . . . Behold, I am against you, Mount Seir, and I shall stretch out my hand against you, and I shall make you a desolation (שְׁמָמָה) and a waste (וּמִשְׁמָּה). Your cities I shall lay waste (חָרְבָה), and you shall be a desolation (שְׁמָמָה). And then you shall know that I am Yahweh.

"Reading between" such texts sensitizes the reader to intra-textual relationships which Boadt says abound in Ezekiel. Recognizing such intra-textuality should prove heuristically helpful for diachronic analysis in pointing to the author/redactor's intention that these texts be heard or read together. There is no hopeful tone, no expectation of mercy from Yahweh, no hint of a saving "knowledge" in the judgment oracles which contain the recognition formula. Those in Israel who defiantly break covenant with Yahweh are destroyed in a manner similar to the nations who have attacked the covenant people and have awakened Yahweh's vengeance. Both experience Yahweh's outpoured wrath: Israel (7:3, 8; 36:18;

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[46] Other good examples for comparison could be cited: cf. 22:15-16 with 30:26 or 5:13 with 25:17.

etc.) and the nations (25:14; 38:18). Just as there seems to be no hope whatsoever that the Israelites destroyed in Yahweh's wrath will ever "know that I am Yahweh" in salvation and blessing, the reader cannot expect the nations judged in wrath to know him in a saving sense. We again may compare texts spoken to Israel and to the nations in oracles of judgment.

> 6:3b, 5-7 — Behold I, even I, shall bring a sword upon you, and I shall destroy your high places. . . . And I shall lay the corpses of the sons of Israel before their altars, and I shall scatter your bones all around your altars. In all of your settlements the cities shall be laid waste and the high places ruined . . . The slain shall fall in your midst and you shall know that I am Yahweh.
>
> 28:23 — And I shall send plague upon her [Sidon] and blood into her streets, and in her midst the slain shall fall by the sword that is against her on every side. And they shall know that I am Yahweh.
>
> 32:11b-15 — The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. By the swords of mighty men I shall cause your multitude to fall, by the most terrible of all the nations. They shall bring to nothing the pride of Egypt, and all its multitude shall perish. I shall destroy all her beasts from beside her great waters, which shall not be disturbed anymore by human feet or beasts' hooves. . . . When I make the land of Egypt a desolation, and when the land is stripped of all that fills it, and when I strike down all who live in her, then they shall know that I am Yahweh.

One faces a tall challenge in interpreting the verb ידע as used in Ezekiel's recognition formulae spoken in judgment. In the texts above, what does it mean to "know that I am Yahweh" as the sword cuts the subject down? What is the content of the "knowledge"? The book of Ezekiel teaches that the nations will know Yahweh's vengeance and his wrath. They will learn who is punishing them, the identity of Yahweh as Israel's covenant God who may by turns punish Israel with exile (39:23) or defend Israel from other nations. The nations will not only experience the truth that Yahweh is wrathful toward them, they will also be confronted by Yahweh himself, who announces in his prophesied actions "I am Yahweh." It is not merely truths about Israel's God which the nations come to know. Yahweh announces to Gog: "I shall bring you against my land that *the nations may know me* when before their eyes I show my holiness through you" (38:16), and "I will show my greatness and my holiness and *make myself known* in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am Yahweh" (38:23).[47]

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[47] Another verse which may make the same point is 35:11, which records Yahweh's declaration to Edom, "I shall make myself known among you when I judge you." The MT reads "make myself known among them (ונודעתי בם)," but many scholars follow the LXX reading (σοι = בך) as "more to the

c. Three Texts Which May Raise Questions

Ezekiel 36:36, one of only two texts to which some appeal may be made in support of the idea that the recognition formula comports with a promise of blessing upon the nations, does not truly contradict the theological conclusion in this section. The nations in 36:36 do not receive any blessing, covenantal or otherwise; they are mere onlookers, observing that the destroyed nation and land of Israel have been rebuilt.

> And/then the nations which remain around you shall know that I am Yahweh, I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted what was desolate. I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I shall do it.

The nations are clearly outside of the covenant community looking on with amazement at the restoration of the agriculture to such a verdant state—"like the Garden of Eden" (36:35).

Some scholars' mistaken notion, that the nations are to share in the spiritual and material blessings Yahweh rains down upon his own people, probably results from a confounding of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Studies in Isaiah, the better known major prophet, can color the interpreter's perspective on Ezekiel. Isaiah's repeated use of the Creation/Creator motif easily moves toward the portrayal of Yahweh's universal concern (cf. Is. 42:1-6, 10-12; 45:3-22; 49:6; 52:10; 55:5; 56:3-7; 60:1-9; 61:11; 66:18). In Isaiah the nations are gathered and attracted toward the land of Israel. Ezekiel's theological focus is more on the Exodus event, and so the prophet emphasizes Israel's "new Exodus"[48] *out of the nations* and into a renewed covenant relation to Yahweh (36:24-30).

The second text which may be referenced as potentially calling into question this section's conclusion is Ezekiel 29:16. Preceding verses promise that Yahweh "will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered and restore the fortunes of Egypt and return them to the land of Pathros" (vv. 13-14a). However, the overall tone of

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point" (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 716). Greenberg follows Zimmerli's lead (*Ezekiel 2*, p. 226) in suggesting that the "MT may have arisen by inadvertent assimilation to the preceding *bm*." Those who favor the MT, perhaps as the *lectio difficilior*, include Allen (*Ezekiel 20–48*, p. 168) and Block (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, p. 313).

[48] Motif analysis of the Book of Isaiah shows that he also prophesies a "new Exodus," but that motif hardly has the same prominence as in Ezekiel. New Exodus imagery appears in Is. 41:9; 43:5-6, 16-19; 49:17-18; 51:10-11; 52:12; 56:8; 58:8. Clearly, there are in Isaiah numerous allusions to Exodus, but most are passing allusions, poetic in nature. See also Zimmerli's comparison study: "Der 'Neue Exodus' in der Verkündigung der beiden großen Exilspropheten," included in *Gottes Offenbarung*.

the pericope is quite negative: "they shall be a lowly kingdom, the most lowly of kingdoms it shall be, and will never again exalt herself above other nations. I shall make them so small that they shall never again dominate the nations" (14b-15). Joyce has good reason to assert that "the restoration of Egypt which is envisaged in Ezek. 29.13-16 in fact amounts to a humiliation."[49] Ezekiel 29 certainly speaks of no covenant blessing for Egypt. Instead, God's dealings with that land will ensure that the Israelites never again rely upon their southern neighbor for political and military assistance, thus "recalling their iniquity in turning to them" (v. 16). The prophesied "restoration" amounts to such a humiliation that it would be folly to depend upon Egypt rather than Yahweh (Psa. 40:5).[50]

Block has shed good light on why Egypt, in this single text,[51] might have been viewed differently from other surrounding nations and been addressed in "a modified restoration oracle," rather than with a prophecy of utter destruction. In an intertextual approach (without using that terminology), he points to the close correspondence between 29:16 and an earlier text, 28:24, which articulates Yahweh's purpose in destroying the other nations surrounding Israel. His chart is reproduced below (but adding the recognition formula).[52]

28:24	**29:16**
ולא־יהיה עוד לבית ישׂראל סלון ממאיר וקוץ מכאב מכל סביבתם השׂאטים אותם וידעו כי אני אדני יהוה:	ולא יהיה־עוד לבית ישׂראל למבטח מזכיר עון בפנותם אחריהם וידעו כי אני אדני יהוה:
And there will be no more for the house of Israel a prickling briar or painful thorn from any of their neighbors who treated them with contempt. And they shall know that I am Lord Yahweh.	And there will be no more for the house of Israel an object of trust — a reminder of iniquity because they turned to them [Egypt]. And they shall know that I am Lord Yahweh.

[49] Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response*, 154 (note 7).

[50] Greenberg quotes the Psalm text in his commentary (*Ezekiel 21–37*, p. 607).

[51] This text stands out among Ezekiel's oracles against Egypt, already quoted in this chapter; they generally read as harshly as any oracles against other nations.

[52] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, p. 144.

In juxtaposition, Block says these two texts show "the differences in the charges Ezekiel had leveled against the six neighbor states on the one hand and against Egypt on the other." While the former are to be condemned and removed from the scene for their hostility toward the covenant people, their *Schadenfreude* when Judah collapsed, and their intent to appropriate Judah's territory for themselves (see 35:12), Egypt may be treated with moderation because that nation "had tried to prevent the collapse of Judah." Yahweh could accomplish his purpose of removing Egypt as an "object of trust" for his people "by merely reducing Egypt to vassal status and neutralizing its imperialistic ambitions."[53] This hardly spells covenant blessing and salvation for Egypt. The recognition formulae which conclude these texts are identical and unique in Ezekiel; there are no other examples of the formula in the 3rd person with the variation of the double designation for God, אדני יהוה. This strengthens Block's case that these texts echo each other and should be read together: each begins and ends the exact same way as the other. In summary, the two texts commonly brought forward (29:16 and 36:36) do not support the contention that the recognition formulae anticipate the nations experiencing deliverance or covenantal blessing.

The third text contains no recognition formula addressed to the nations and, therefore, does not call into question the main conclusion of this section (no positive use of the formula when spoken to the nations). However, it may raise doubts about the ancillary conclusion that there is no hopeful message or salvation oracle directed toward the nations in Ezekiel. Chapter 16, which contains plenty of difficulties as an allegory, has an enigmatic conclusion which speaks of Jerusalem's two "sisters," Samaria being an older sibling and Sodom being a younger. There is certainly "restoration" language in 16:53 as Yahweh gives both promises and exhortations in the larger text including adjacent verses:

> (52) . . . They are more in the right than you, and so you, too, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters look righteous. (53) I shall restore their fortunes (ושבתי את־שביתהן), the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and the fortunes of Samaria and of her daughters, and I shall restore your fortunes in the midst of them, (54) so that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them.

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[53] Ibid., 145. It seems best to downplay the notion that Egypt's judgment is moderated because she tried to help Judah (see Ralph W. Klein, *Ezekiel: The Prophet and His Message* [Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988], 137). Rather, she posed a more minor threat as a wrong "object of trust."

In Ezekiel's rhetoric the more righteous Samaria and Sodom must be restored somehow, if Jerusalem is to be restored by God.

However, what kind of restoration awaits Samaria and Sodom? Should the interpreter follow Greenberg who says, "a decision of God to *forgive* and restore her [Jerusalem] must in all fairness entail the same for her sisters"?[54] How similar are the restorations of Jerusalem and Samaria/Sodom? The idea of forgiveness does not seem to be required by the text, which speaks instead of the sisters' "return" or "restoration" לקדמתן "to their former state/situation." The chapter is careful, it seems, *not* to speak of Jerusalem's restoration in the same sense.

> (55) As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former state, and you and your daughters shall return to your former state.

A distinction between a forgiven Jerusalem (16:63) who is restored and the restored "sisters" is also emphasized later in chapter 16 where the language of covenant is employed in conjunction with a recognition formula addressed to Israel. The oracle reads,

> (60) But I myself will remember the covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I shall establish (קום, Hiphil) an everlasting covenant. (61) And you shall remember your ways and be ashamed in taking your sisters, both your elder and your younger; and I shall give them to you as daughters but not on account of the covenant with you (ולא מבריתך). (62) I myself shall establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh.

The last phrase of verse 61 is definitely "difficult to interpret"[55] with its preposition, and one cannot be certain of the best rendering. But good sense can be made of the Hebrew in context by taking it to mean "though not as participants in your covenant" (Zimmerli) or "not on the basis of my covenant with you" (NIV).[56]

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[54] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 289, emphasis added.

[55] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 353.

[56] Ibid., 333. Cf. NJPS ("though they are not of your covenant"), ESV. Greenberg prefers to read the preposition causatively with the sense of "not because you [Jerusalem] have kept the covenant" (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 292). Block well explains the various interpretive options, and he renders the phrase "even though they are not your covenant partners" (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 512).

d. Conclusion

Within Ezekiel's prophecy and during the time of national calamity, attention has reverted almost exclusively to the covenant community. There appears to be little concern for or issue made of the nations, apart from the major section of chapters 25 through 32. (The judgment speeches against Gog and Magog in chapters 38–39 are lodged within the section of oracles of salvation spoken to Israel.) And what attention is paid to them, when the focus shifts briefly to Yahweh's relationship to the nations, seems subordinate to other interests. The note struck in such passages is always and only one of vindication of Yahweh's name (compare Exod 9:16; etc.) or the defense of the covenant community (through retribution upon her enemies for their hostility). The note of grace is missing, as is the idea of evangelization, though the public vindication of Yahweh's honor might be viewed as a necessary step toward a future divine work of grace among the nations.[57] This theme of vindication is a key to understanding the majority of the formulae in Ezekiel (those attached to oracles of judgment). The more exclusive focus on Israel, her correction and restoration, makes sense from any angle. Israel is primary in Yahweh's plan of intervention, unfolded in Ezekiel, because—though Ezekiel does not make this plain—Israel's restoration is preliminary to her serving fruitfully as a witness to Yahweh among the nations. Ezekiel leaves unsaid the truth so prominent in Isaiah: that gracious divine action toward the covenant community is directed toward the goal of blessing the nations. One must study elsewhere in the Old Testament to learn that the nations will only be blessed through a revitalized covenant people, through Abraham's *true* seed.

One may properly draw the conclusion that the idea of the nations' salvation as a part of Yahweh's plan is neither propounded nor contradicted; it is simply absent in Ezekiel. The recognition formulae spoken to the nations lend no support to those like Reventlow who wish to interpret Ezekiel as prophesying the conversion of the nations to trust and worship Yahweh as their own God. Paul Hanson writes,

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[57] Concern for the vindication of Yahweh's name before the nations in his dealings with his people is also evident in Exodus (see 32:12ff.).

> His judgment and his salvation were both parts of a universal plan of bringing the knowledge of Yahweh to all the world, and bringing *šālôm* to a people living in obedience, righteousness, and purity in a city named "Yahweh is there."[58]

"All the world," the nations, will indeed come to "know that I am Yahweh," but as in Exodus so in Ezekiel the interpreter may and should mark a difference between "knowing Yahweh" and "knowing Yahweh's salvation." In terms of the loci discussed in Systematic Theology, one should mark a difference between revelation and salvation. In the theology of Ezekiel, the recipients of the former outnumber the recipients of the latter.

2. The Formula Connected To Yahweh's Acting In History

When Jehoiakim burned the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies (Jer. 35), that ruler exemplified what the Bible presents as a common sin of Israel down through the centuries. The stubborn refusal of the nation to hear and heed the word of Yahweh through his messengers was characteristic of her entire history. When Moses was sent to speak Yahweh's comforting promises of salvation to the elders of the people, they listened at first (Exod. 4:31), but later, it is recorded, "they did not listen to Moses because of their despondency (קֹצֶר רוּחַ) and cruel servitude" (6:9). Even Moses himself struggled with unbelief and impatience before Yahweh; he objects, "And rescued? You have *not* rescued your people" (5:23). Because the people faithlessly ignored God's word, he chose to reveal himself in another way, one which would prove irrefutable (cf. Exod. 14:31). He would directly intervene in the history of the nation. In the book of Ezekiel we see a similar pattern where the people refuse to believe the word. Yahweh tells the prophet, "the house of Israel is unwilling to listen to you because they are unwilling to listen to me" (3:7). There is the strong implication in the judgment oracles which follow that Yahweh has decided to add to his words powerful actions which the nation will be unable to gainsay.

In the book of Exodus the recognition formula is always connected to Yahweh's self-revelation in the area of historical experience. The formula is always connected with a direct act of Yahweh or with his giving the sign of the Sabbath. Key phrasing often combined

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[58] Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 222.

with the recognition formula is: "I shall do *x*; then you shall know" and "when I make/ have made *x*, you shall know." The same connection to historical experience of Yahweh's acts or to the institution of the Sabbath in history is characteristic of Ezekiel's formulae. Hardly any formula in Ezekiel falls outside of this pattern. That connection to historical event is most significant; it seems misleading to say that "history is only ancillary to Yahweh's self-demonstration, for the 'I am Yahweh' addressed to the listener is the real focus."[59] In Ezekiel's theology Yahweh's words are being disregarded by the people in their unbelief, and the time has come for Yahweh to act so as to prove that "I did not threaten in vain to bring this evil upon them" (Ezek. 6:10). God says, "I, Yahweh, have spoken and I shall do it" (22:14) and "all my words which I speak, each will be performed" (12:28). The strongest assertion comes in 24:14: "I, Yahweh, have spoken. It shall come to pass and I shall do it. I shall not go back, and I shall not spare, and I shall not repent" (cf. Num. 14:35, . . . אני יהוה דברתי אם־לא זאת אעשה).

Almost all of the strict formulae and the expansions cannot point to anything other than direct divine intervention in the realm of history and personal experience. The following selection of recognition formulae from Exodus and Ezekiel may be taken as representative:

a) You shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

b) The Egyptians shall know . . . when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the children of Israel out of it.

c) I will distinguish the land of Goshen on that day . . . no swarm of flies will be there, so that you shall know that I, Yahweh, am in this land.

d) You may tell your children . . . how I toyed (עלל, Hithpael) with the Egyptians and set my signs among them, that you may know . . .[60]

e) The Egyptians shall know . . . when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots . . .

f) You shall fall by the sword, and at the border of Israel I shall judge you. Then you shall know . . .

g) They shall know . . ., when I disperse them among the nations

h) You shall know . . ., when I bring you into the land of Israel

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[59] Walther Zimmerli, " 'Offenbarung' im Alten Testament," *Evangelische Theologie* 22 (1962): 30. Cited in Botterweck, "ידע *yada'*," *TDOT*, vol. 5: 471.

[60] "Toyed" is the rendering suggested by Childs (*Exodus*, 126). Durham has an expansive translation: "amused myself aggravating" (*Exodus*, 131).

i) To the people of the East . . . I shall give it [Moab] as a possession . . . I shall execute judgments upon Moab and then they shall know . . .[61]

In short, Israel and the nations will know that Yahweh himself "strikes the blow" when judgment comes. And in salvation oracles they will have a revelation of God when Yahweh himself has accomplished the restoration of the people to their land and to a proper covenant relationship. They can come to that realization because a clarifying (or interpreting) word has been spoken by Yahweh along with his acting in the realm of history. Word and action in tandem bring recognition and knowledge of Yahweh.

There is one possible exception to the rule which requires attention. Greenberg says that the "recognition-clause" found in 11:12 "is unique in its reference to Israel's sin rather than to God's action, which will bring about recognition of his authority." The text reads: . . . אשפט אתכם: וידעתם כי־אני יהוה אשר בחקי לא הלכתם . . . Further, Greenberg remarks on how

> This singular turn-about, emphasizing the ground of the punishment rather than the punishment itself, inverts the order of the elements of 5:7-10 (where ground [vs. 7] precedes consequence) and thus calls attention to its echoing character.[62]

Greenberg chooses to read אשר as a conjunction introducing a causal clause: "for" or "because." Others agreeing with this rendering are Hals, Block,[63] and the translators of the NIV and ESV. Another option which is widely accepted is to translate אשר as a relative particle: "according to whose statutes you have not walked"; this rendering is favored by Zimmerli, Allen, and the translators of NJPS and NRSV.[64] If one confronts grammatical ambiguity in connecting 11:12a and 12b, and if the recognition formula follows immediately after the word about Yahweh's punishment of Jerusalem's leadership ("at the border of Israel I shall judge you"), can one say with conviction that the recognition is not attributable to God's action? The claim made in this section, that the formula (and the recognition of which it speaks) is connected to Yahweh's acting in history, still appears to stand. Even

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[61] The references for these nine passages are: Exodus 6:7; 7:5; 8:22 [MT 8:18]; 10:2; 14:18; Ezekiel 11:10; 12:15; 20:42; 25:10-11.

[62] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 188.

[63] Hals, *Ezekiel*, 65; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, pp. 328, 337-38.

[64] Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, p. 229; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, p. 128.

where a few of the *expansions* of the keynote formula "point to God's qualities, not to the events in which these features become known,"[65] the linkage with God's action remains strong within the oracle which contains the recognition formula (e.g., 38:16; 39:7). In no case is Yahweh known apart from his actions.

We turn briefly to the question of why the recognition formula does not appear in chapters 40–48. A partial answer may be that that keynote formula has a strongly prophetic element, and the last nine chapters are mainly descriptive of a golden age which has come, a time when prophecies of restoration seem already to have been fulfilled.[66] There hardly seems any place for declarations that Israel "shall know that I am Yahweh," for the people dwell safely in the land in fellowship with Yahweh (וְשֵׁם־הָעִיר מִיּוֹם יְהוָה שָׁמָּה, 48:35). That is, in the perfect restoration of the people with their permanent temple, their kingdom, land inheritance, covenant relationship, etc., the prophecy latent in the formula is fulfilled.[67] But some might require a fuller answer to the question of why the recognition formula fails to appear in 40–48. Two observations are helpful: the prophecy rarely employs the formula in the vision report genre,[68] and chapters 40–48 contain no oracles prophesying Yahweh's intervention in history, which, we argue, is the context for all the recognition formulae.

Because of this extraordinary stress upon recognizing Yahweh in his actions, quite a few interpreters of both Exodus and Ezekiel have translated the recognition formula so as to reflect this link. Luther used *"erfahren sollen"* almost exclusively in translating the formula in Exodus and Ezekiel, rather than *"merken," "erkennen,"* or another verb. *Erfahren* tends to carry the connotation of "coming to know by experience," at least more so than its German synonyms. Luther's choice continues to be reflected in German Bibles

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[65] Odell, "Are You He of Whom I Spoke," 128. In examining the formulae, the expansions, and their immediate contexts, she draws "the conclusion that the recognition formula retains its connection to the idea that God will be made manifest in history" (129).

[66] "The fact that God has already constructed the Temple" in the concluding vision raises questions for interpreters like Levenson (*The Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48*, p. 45). Does this "mean that man has no role in its construction"? Levenson firmly says no; he avers that Ezekiel sees a mere model, and that Israel must follow that pattern in her construction. But there is little evidence for this.

[67] The restoration may accompany the knowledge "that I am Yahweh," or it may be premised upon that knowledge.

[68] As already noted in chapter three above, there are no recognition formulae in Ezekiel 1–3, 8–11 (except for the oracle of judgment against Jerusalem's leadership in 11:5-12, which interrupts the vision report), or 40–48. The only keynote formulae occurring in a vision report are found in chapter 37.

How is the revelation or knowledge of God mediated to us? Some have given strong emphasis to historical events as the locus of revelation (G. Ernest Wright),[75] while others have stressed the divine word (Vriezen).[76] Perhaps the most refined positions, those of Zimmerli and Rendtorff, give an important place to both historical event and the divine word while prioritizing them differently. Rendtorff seems to follow von Rad more closely in giving priority to historical events (as tradition) in revelation. Gerhard von Rad famously said that "the Old Testament is a history-book (*Geschichtsbuch*)," and that "[f]rom first to last Israel manifestly takes as her starting-point the absolute priority in theology of event over *'logos.'*"[77] Zimmerli gave priority to the word instead of event, and this generated a conflict with the view of Rendtorff. Setting quotes representing their positions alongside each other is illuminating. When Rendtorff argued that history "is *not* something penultimate which has only a subservient function in relation to the self-manifestation of Jahweh," Zimmerli said "history is only ancillary to Yahweh's self-demonstration, for the 'I am Yahweh' addressed to the listener is the real focus."[78] This study draws the conclusion that event and word need not be set at odds or in competition with each other, neither should they be separated. Event without the word is uninterpreted and meaningless for the observer, while word without event is not the demonstration Ezekiel's oracles claim it is.[79] This linkage comes to the fore especially in Ezekiel 29:21, where Yahweh promises to

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[75] See G. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts. Biblical Theology as Recital.* Studies in Biblical Theology. (London: SCM, 1952), who writes that "history is the chief medium of revelation" (13).

[76] Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958). He writes, "In other words, Israel owes this knowledge to the special revelation granted to the prophets, from the earliest times (Abraham or Moses); and it was preserved to the end by the Prophets alone, who spoke the explanatory Word of God all through Israel's history" (133). Vriezen does not completely overlook the historical; see 136ff.

[77] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. II: 415, and vol. I: 116.

[78] Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," 46; Zimmerli, "'Offenbarung' im Alten Testament," 30.

[79] Here the intention is to be true (in a descriptive sense) to Ezekiel's prophecy and its categories. While many may speak of "the collapse of history" within the contemporary discipline of Old Testament Theology, historical reference and meaningfulness are of monumental importance in the proclamation of the ancient Hebrew prophets and cannot be dispensed with or disparaged. Ezekiel (who does not share any Kantian Enlightenment problems or strategies) could never have granted Lessing's premise that there is, in the events prophesied, something "accidental." For discussion of the "collapse," see Leo G. Perdue, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); idem,

"make a horn spring forth for the house of Israel" *and* to open Ezekiel's mouth among them (to interpret?); "then they shall know that I am Yahweh."

In Ezekiel's theology, and in the Old Testament prophets more generally, there is frequently a merging together of event and word. This occurs where the prophet's proclamation (word) of God's mighty acts (history) in the past is also the occasion for declaring (word) both what God intends to accomplish among his people (event) and how those future events should be interpreted (word).[80] Reventlow finds a similar insight in von Rad:

> However, history and word are related to each other, for the way in which these historical actions are open to constantly new interpretations by later generations "in a direct ratio to their understanding of their own position in the light of their fathers' history with God" (II, 375 = ET 361) provides an ongoing context of interpretation: "History becomes word and word becomes history" (II, 371 = ET 358). Here the future, too, is always interpreted in the light of experiences of the past.[81]

3. YAHWEH ACTS TO REVEAL HIS HOLY NAME AND TO GUARD ITS HONOR

From a literary and rhetorical standpoint, the recognition formula in Ezekiel commonly forms the conclusion (*letzten Bestandteil*) or "target statement of a larger discursive sequence" (*Ziel- und Schlußaussage eines Wortgefüges*).[82] Theologically, the refrain states both the purpose and goal of God's self-revelation in historical events. He acts and, just as importantly, tells the interpretation of his acts in history, so that people should recognize and acknowledge the Actor's claim, "I am Yahweh," the God who maintains the honor of his holy name by keeping covenant. In both Exodus and Ezekiel, God is re-revealing himself by his name, Yahweh, to a nation that has forgotten him.[83] But there is something more.

Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History, OBT (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).

[80] In one place Zimmerli mentions another linkage between event and word. He speaks of how "Ezekiel . . . sets in motion mighty events through his word" (*Ezekiel 1*, p. 259).

[81] Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 74.

[82] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 33 (*Gottes Offenbarung*, 46).

[83] In Ezekiel's historical retrospective, the nation had already corrupted themselves with the idols of Egypt during their time of slavery (Ezek. 20:7-8; 23:27); this turning away from the God of their ancestors

Great dishonor has been brought to the name Yahweh by an insolent Pharaoh who sneers, "Who is Yahweh, that I should listen to his voice and let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh and I will not let Israel go" (Exod. 5:2). Therefore, Yahweh will strike Egypt with plague after plague in order to vindicate his name. Through his spokesman God declares to Pharaoh, "By this you will know that I am Yahweh" (Exod. 7:17). In Ezekiel's time great dishonor is being brought upon the name of Yahweh by the detestable practices of his people to whom he is bound by covenant and also by the punishment of exile that Israel had to endure (36:20-21).

Both in Exodus and in Ezekiel, covenant promises, sealed by the attached holy name of Yahweh, have been made and must be kept. In light of God's explanation of his own acts offered in Ezekiel 36, the interpreter has a solid basis for asserting that the true context of the divine oracles is not so much the condition of the people as it is the injury which Yahweh's name and honor have suffered, and his commitment to act to vindicate his name. "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, *but for the sake of my holy name*, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will vindicate the holiness of my great name . . ." (36:22-23). This commitment would bring him to act against his own people and also for them. There is no contradiction here, for as Bullock points out,

> Ezekiel's apologetic for the nature of God can be traced throughout the book. Chapter 20 is a classic expression of that apologetic applied to the national history. It was Yahweh's own name and character that he was concerned with, not Israel's. When his covenant people and the nations around them came to acknowledge who he was, then he would be truly vindicated. To say, however, that he was intent upon protecting his own reputation is not in the least to suggest that he had no concern with Israel's. Rather it is to suggest that the Lord was most true to his people when he was most true to himself. When he was true to himself, he could not be false to Israel.[84]

Ezekiel so stresses the divine side of Yahweh's argument with his people because the exiles needed to understand Yahweh's grievances and his impulsion to act on behalf of his name if

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could be regarded as a forgetting. The prophet then makes his case that the Israel of his day is in spiritual solidarity with the earlier idolatrous generations (20:30). Ezekiel scores his own generation for forgetting Yahweh (שׁכח, 22:12; 23:35).

[84] C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetical Books* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 251.

they were to understand Yahweh himself. Yahweh was compelled to act because, not only had his covenant people refused to guard the honor of his holy name (a sin of omission), Israel herself had actively profaned the name (sin of commission).

In the book of Exodus, one senses that the revelation of the divine name is nearly identical to the revelation of Yahweh himself. It has been argued that to know a person's name was much the same as knowing the person in Old Testament times.[85] Though this idea has been challenged and caution is in order,[86] there is some validity to it. Scholars today still make the claim that

> In the ancient Sem. world a person's name often carried more significance than an identification mark; it was considered to be a description of character or conditions. Having or giving a name was related to, if not determinative of, one's existence (Gervitz, "Of Patriarchs and Puns," *HUCA* 46, 1975, 33). . . . It is because the name of a person, place, or thing was considered deeply bound up with the character and perhaps the destiny that naming played an important part in the narratives.[87]

The name Yahweh does communicate something of the power and nature of the God of the Old Testament. The declaration of the name carries with it the authority and the holiness of Yahweh himself; for this reason that name must be hallowed and not misused (the Third Commandment). And ignorance of that name is both tragic and dangerous. This seems to be an accurate assessment when one recalls Moses' plea to God to reveal his name before he took God's message to the people. He said, "they might ask, 'what is his name?'" (Exod. 3:13). Were Moses not to have an answer, he would immediately be disqualified as Yahweh's spokesman. God granted Moses to know his name and told his prophet that Yahweh "is my name forever, by this [name] I am to be remembered from generation to generation" (3:15). Thereafter, with the name committed to him, Moses could go confidently to Pharaoh to speak in the name of Yahweh (5:23).

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[85] Walther Eichrodt has written, "If the saying *nomina sunt realia* is valid in any context, it is surely that of the divine name in the ancient world." *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 178.

[86] Among those issuing a challenge and urging caution are: James Barr, "The Symbolism of Names in the Old Testament," *BJRL* 52.1 (1969): 11-29; A. S. van der Woude, "שֵׁם *šēm* Name," *THAT*, vol. II: 935-63; and F. V. Reiterer with H.-J. Fabry, "שֵׁם *šem*," *ThWAT*, vol. 8: 122-76.

[87] Allen P. Ross, "שֵׁם," *NIDOTTE*, vol. 4: 147. Ross wisely steers clear of the excessive claims once made in biblical scholarship. He does not assert with *IDB* that "a name is regarded as possessing an inherent power which exercises a constraint upon its bearer; he must conform to his essential nature as expressed in his name" (R. Abba, "Name," *IDB*, vol. 3: 501).

The plagues brought upon Egypt became a declaration of Yahweh's name with the accompanying recognition formulae. Both those to be redeemed and those to be judged hear the name declared. Moses was sent to speak to Pharaoh a terrifying message that "I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exod. 9:16 NIV). Beyond the plague narratives, Yahweh intends the great deliverance at the Red Sea to be the occasion when his name is declared and he gets the glory for saving his people. "I shall get glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his forces, and the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh" (14:4, cf. 17-18) In fulfillment of this prophecy, all Israel sings praise to Yahweh at the sea. Viewing the bodies of their pursuers washing up on the seashore (14:30), they sing, "Yahweh is a warrior; Yahweh is his name!" (15:3). The nation ought, then, to have understood the importance of jealously guarding the name of Yahweh (Exod. 20:7).

According to both the Exodus narratives and Ezekiel's recounting of Israel's history, the generation which experienced the Exodus from Egypt—God's own people—did not guard the honor of the name but ruined or defiled themselves with idolatry when they were in the wilderness (Exod 32:7-8; cf. Ezek 20:13-20). Upon what basis does Moses plead with Yahweh to spare the rebellious nation? Moses makes his appeal to Yahweh that he should relent from his anger against the people he had so famously delivered because, if Yahweh did destroy Israel, Egypt could then slander him for having an "evil purpose in bringing them out" (32:12). Concern for God's reputation is an all-important issue in Exodus 32 and in Ezekiel's reflections on Yahweh's purposes in the Wilderness to act "for the sake of my name."

Having gained perspective with his look back over the course of redemptive history, Ezekiel understood. He realized the importance of guarding the honor of the divine name, and he also realized, perhaps with a sense of horror, the guilt which attached to the sin of profaning the name. His response to this truth was first to explain to the exiles how Yahweh had vindicated his holiness at the time of the Exodus; he does this in chapter 20, his review of the nation's history. Ezekiel records Yahweh as saying, "But I acted for the sake of my name, to keep it from being profaned" (vv. 9, 14, 22). The second aspect of his response

was to explain how Yahweh was vindicating his holy name in their own day. Four times over Ezekiel denounces the people for polluting (טמא, Piel) and profaning (חלל, Piel) Yahweh's "holy name" (20:39; 36:20-23; 39:7; 43:8). In Ezekiel's day, because Yahweh's people did not honor and protect his name, Yahweh himself was compelled to "pity" (חמל, 36:21), "consecrate" (קדש Piel, 36:23), "make known" (ידע Hiphil, 39:7), and "jealously guard" (קנא Piel, 39:25) his holy name. Certain judgment for Israel was bound up with their abuse of the name of Yahweh, and the mere declaration of Yahweh's name in the recognition formula served to emphasize the connection between judgment and the name. Every utterance of the name in prophecies of judgment reinforced in the minds of the hearers that profanation of the name Yahweh had roused Yahweh to guard his honor. How profound that Yahweh's response to the profaning of his name is the fresh declaration of that holy name in the recognition formula!

But beyond judgment Yahweh would also act to restore his people "for his name's sake." The grace of this holy God is seen in his promise to deal with his people, "for my name's sake and neither according to your evil ways nor according to your corrupt practices" (20:44). The restoration and blessing of the nation, announced with the recognition formula, could also vindicate and glorify the name Yahweh. This is the significance of Ezekiel's final vision (chapters 40-48). Ezekiel was given a brief, detailed look at the perfect restoration that awaits God's people. The glory of Yahweh enters the eschatological Temple, and there at the foot of the throne Ezekiel hears,

> . . . [This is] where I will live among the children of Israel forever. The house of Israel will not defile my holy name any longer—they and their kings—by their prostitution and by the lifeless idols (בפגרי, dead bodies?) of their kings at their high places. (Ezekiel 43:7)

Israel will give evidence that they finally know Yahweh's name and revere it when they have put away all their idols. The God who had to depart his temple because the people defiled his name will never need depart it again.

4. The Irresistibility Of Yahweh's Self-Revelation

Considering how Ezekiel ben Buzi "is concerned above all else to defend the honor of Yahweh's name," Zimmerli joins others inclined to regard him as "the Calvin of the prophets."[88] Yet there is another "Calvinistic" emphasis in Ezekiel's theology besides his God-centeredness and the focus upon God's glory: the stress on absolute divine sovereignty. God may be resisted up to a point, either by his prophet or by his people,[89] but his ultimate purposes cannot be thwarted. This appears to be another similarity between Ezekiel's prophecy and Exodus, for much is made of the divine initiative in both books. Theologians have long been drawn to both books in discussions of the relationship between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility.[90] (What do we make of the Exodus narratives where Pharaoh hardens his own heart, and Yahweh also hardens Pharaoh's heart?[91] And how do we understand the prophecy of Ezekiel where Israel, on the one hand, is exhorted to "get a new heart and new spirit" [18:31] but, on the other, also hears assurances that Yahweh will give a "new heart and new spirit" [36:26; cf. 11:19]?)

For the recognition formulae in Exodus and Ezekiel, is the "knowing" contingent upon a favorable human response, perhaps even conversion? In Exodus 6:6-8 there is significance to the seven "I will" statements of Yahweh[92] being connected with the first

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[88] Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, trans. David E. Green (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 207; or "the John Calvin of the Old Testament," according to Emil G. Kraeling, *Commentary on the Prophets*, 2 vols. (Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson, 1966), I:403; and M. H. Woudstra, "Edom and Israel in Ezekiel," *CTJ* 3 (1968): 26.

[89] In Exodus Moses' resistance to Yaweh's call is plain to see. Was Ezekiel also reluctant and resistant? Daniel Block and others are now pointing to suggestions in the text that Ezekiel was reluctant, at least in some measure (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, pp. 11-12). Cf. Phinney, "The Prophetic Objection," who suggests that 4:12-15 may have been added to the call narrative of Chapters 1–3 so as to conform to the Mosaic paradigm of a resisted call.

[90] Or, alternatively, divine initiative and human response. For extended discussion, see especially Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel.*

[91] Pharaoh is said to harden (כבד) his own heart in Exod. 8:15, 32; 9:34; and Yahweh hardens (חזק) Pharaoh's heart in Exod. 4:21; 7:3 (קשׁה); 9:12; 10:1 (כבד), 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17. In several other texts there is ambiguity about who hardens (7:13, 14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35).

[92] "I will bring you forth" (והוצאתי אתכם); "I will free you" (והצלתי אתכם); "I will redeem you" (וגאלתי אתכם); "I will take you as my people" (ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם); "I will be God to you" (והייתי לכם לאלהים); "I will bring you into the land" (והבאתי אתכם אל־הארץ); "and I will give it to you" (ונתתי אתה לכם).

recognition formula in the book. Only in the context of Yahweh's sure promise to act and of Yahweh's fulfillment of his promises will the nation know him and the glory of his covenant name. But when he acts it seems that there is no question of, no hazard that those acts will fail to result in, human recognition or acceptance of Yahweh's self-assertion. The same is true in Ezekiel. In the face of Israel's rebellion—מרי and related forms occur twenty-two times—Yahweh purposes to act incontrovertibly to assert himself and the honor of his name. No matter whether Pharaoh and Israel are hard-hearted (קשה, Exod. 7:3; Ezek. 3:7) toward Yahweh's word, God will have his way.

There seems to be little basis for Zimmerli's attempt to find some human freedom of decision to respond, when confronted with God's intervention. Though Zimmerli acknowledges "the fact that the statement of recognition in the divine view must always resonate something of a concluding finality,"[93] he wishes to join to the "purely indicative translation," with its imperative sense ("they *shall* know that I am Yahweh"), another less forceful one: "they *should* recognize that I am Yahweh." Positing that both elements are always contained in prophetic pronouncements, Zimmerli says that accepting the second sense alongside the first "allows the imperative that confronts human beings to resonate in their freedom of decision and calls them to obedience." He adds that it is difficult "to determine which of the two accents emerge [*sic*] more strongly in any given instance."[94] This student must disagree. Given that "the statement of recognition here in the *perfectum consecutivum* seems quite unobtrusively to follow the foregoing *perfecta consecutiva* that depict Yahweh's acts,"[95] it seems best to interpret the prophesied acts and the prophesied recognition as of equal certainty. Perhaps one may go further and suggest that the acts of God and the human recognition of God are both a divine work,[96] the latter in accord with the gift of a new heart and spirit where saving knowledge is concerned.

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[93] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 37.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] In keeping with much Protestant theology since the Reformation, Karl Barth writes, "Knowledge of God is a knowledge completely effected and determined from the side of its object, from the side of God" (*Dogmatics in Outline*, trans. G. T. Thomson [London: SCM, 1949], 24).

The recognition formulae of Exodus and Ezekiel hardly carry any intonation of appeal. The formula intones a demand,[97] not an invitation to reflect upon and accept the truths and divine Person revealed. Pharaoh *shall*, not should, "know that I am Yahweh" when God acts in judgment (Exod. 7:17; Ezek. 29:3-6). The recognition formula not only "expresses the *intended effect* of the event predicted in the oracle,"[98] it expresses what Yahweh will inevitably accomplish. Any shouted opposition to Yahweh's self-assertion is drowned out by the reassertion "I am Yahweh!" backed by divine action. God will brook no reply. Any contrary response is answered by God's action. This pattern characterizes the cycle of plagues upon Egypt in Exodus and judgments upon Israel throughout her history, as recorded in Ezekiel. Human resistance to God's plan—far from frustrating the divine purpose—ironically seems a part of God's plan.[99] There is a grand and also terrible aspect of divine sovereignty here in these books, where both Pharaoh's and, later, Israel's stubbornness and rebellion are prophesied (Exod. 3:19; 7:3, 13, 22; 8:15, 19; 9:12, 35; 11:9; Ezek. 2:3-5; 3:7; 14:21-23). In all human resistance Yahweh is working out his purpose to show his power and have his name proclaimed in all the earth (Exod. 9:16; 10:1-2; 11:9; 14:4, 17-18; Ezek. 38:16, 17-23; 39:1-7).

Perhaps Zimmerli has not carefully considered the connection between the formulae of Exodus and Ezekiel at this point. Perhaps he has not carefully considered that most of the formulae—as an absolute declaration (perfect *waw* consecutive), "they *shall* know"—are directed toward those who have no inclination or will to acknowledge Yahweh. The assertions are emptied of all power and meaning if they must forever wait for a willing and responsive heart. It is false to say that Yahweh is not known on account of his actions and self-revelation *until* human beings accept the validity of the actions with their accompanying

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[97] Zimmerli himself agrees with this point that Ezekiel's prophetic word in the recognition formula "demands acknowledgment of this God who comes in history and is near in his revelation" (*I Am Yahweh*, 97).

[98] Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 133. Emphasis added.

[99] In the book of Exodus each decision of Pharaoh is prophesied: his refusal to allow Israel to leave throughout the first nine plagues, his decision to expel Israel after the tenth, his decision to chase after Israel when the former slaves appeared to be hemmed in by the sea, and finally the decision to follow Israel into the sea. Time after time, Pharaoh and his officials act "just as Yahweh had said" (כאשר דבר יהוה, 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19; 9:12, 35).

claim. To say that God is not known in his actions and word so much as in human response to an encounter with the divine, is some distance removed from the theology of Ezekiel with its "radical theocentricity" (Joyce). There is no escaping the cumulative force of the repeated refrain. The truth of Yahweh and about Yahweh will be hammered home. Yes, the number of repetitions of the recognition formula, which seems to irk Zimmerli and other commentators, must say something about the receptivity of the prophet's audience. (Driving a nail into an oak plank—or in Central Africa a mukwa plank—requires many more hammer blows than driving a nail into pine.) One must be careful, however, not to miss the additional point made by the repetitions of the formula: Yahweh's determination that he be known.

Though there is theological conjunction between Exodus and Ezekiel on this point that Yahweh's self-revelation is ultimately irresistible, the reader notes a difference as well. The Exodus narratives reveal the fulfillment of the prophecy in the recognition formula: both Pharaoh and Israel do come to know Yahweh. The book of Ezekiel, however, offers no similar narrative of human response to the prophet's oracles; there is no real testimony to recognition. The divine prophecy, "you shall know that I am Yahweh," is truly the last word. In Exodus Israel's strong doubts that God will fulfill his word (6:9; 14:10-12) are overcome, and the nation gives evidence that they recognize Yahweh (12:27; 14:31). In the case of Pharaoh who initially denies Yahweh (5:2), he gradually and grudgingly comes to recognize Yahweh's power.[100] The prophecy of the recognition formula in Exodus is finally fulfilled in two stages. Pharaoh initially submits and sends Israel out, but Yahweh intends a final Egyptian recognition, not in submission but in the destruction of the hard-hearted. The Egyptians die "knowing Yahweh" as their enemy (14:25).

Yahweh's holy name is to be vindicated when Israel and the nations acknowledge him. As already stated, that acknowledgment will differ widely in its practical effect, depending on whether it is effected by unstoppable destruction (upon Israel or the nations) or by fulfilled

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[100] At first Pharaoh is utterly defiant (Exod. 5:2, 6ff.; 7:22-23), but the severity of the plagues begins to show an impact in 8:8 and 18, where Pharaoh asks Moses to intercede for him with Yahweh. In 9:27-28 the proud ruler confesses, "I have done wrong (חטאתי) this time; Yahweh is the righteous one, and I and my people are the guilty. Pray to Yahweh!" Other texts to note in the progressive recognition of Yahweh are: 10:7, 16-17; and 12:31-32.

promises of covenant blessing and restoration (Israel alone). Ezekiel does not appear to entertain for a moment the notion that Yahweh could be frustrated in vindicating himself because of people's failure to cooperate. In Ezekiel's theology, as in the book of Exodus, God is surely able to accomplish his will, and his stated will is that his mighty acts in concert with his word will elicit from his creatures the acknowledgment of Yahweh. God's acts do not occur for their own sake, but rather are purposefully directed at human beings. Yahweh is insistent that Israel and the other nations recognize him.

5. The Nature Of The Knowledge Of God Implied By The Formula

Calvin is surely right in saying that different kinds of knowledge are denoted in the different contexts of the recognition formulae in Ezekiel.[101] On the one hand, those whom the Reformer terms "the reprobate" will know Yahweh as their judge through historical "proofs of His anger." On the other hand, some will come to an utterly different sort of knowledge, one "which brings a sweet taste of paternal love."[102] He indicates that there is no simple, consistent answer to the question about the nature of the knowledge of God implied by the refrain. It is necessary to interpret more broadly the theological content of the refrain. It is simply impossible to do justice to the theological import of the recognition formula in one chapter of a dissertation this size. Therefore, this survey will seek to be suggestive rather than exhaustive in its treatment of the topic.

It was long commonplace in the subdiscipline of Biblical Theology to distinguish sharply between ancient Greek and Hebrew modes of thought. James Barr subjected this approach to a thoroughgoing critique in *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, showing that faulty exegesis usually results if and when that sharp distinction between the dynamic, concrete, totality type of Hebrew thought and the static, abstract, division-producing Greek thought is said to tie in to distinctions of language.[103] Mode of thought and expression of thought ought to be more carefully differentiated.

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[101] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Prophet Ezekiel*, vol. 2, p. 341.

[102] Ibid.

[103] James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1961). See especially chapter two.

Barr's criticisms do apply to the following quote from Geerhardus Vos, in which the old Princeton theologian distinguishes our Western (essentially Greek) concept of knowledge from the oriental:

> According to the former, "to know" means to mirror the reality of a thing in one's consciousness. The Shemitic and Biblical idea is to have the reality of something practically interwoven with the inner experience of life. Hence "to know" can stand in the Biblical idiom for "to love," "to single out in love." Because God desires to be known after this fashion, He has caused his revelation to take place in the milieu of the historical life of the people.[104]

While today's student of Ezekiel may wish to discount some of Vos's explanation or phrase things differently, there is some real substance to his contention that the Hebrew ידע often carries the connotation of practical, even intimate, knowledge gained through experience.[105] In his classic article for *TDOT*, Botterweck says, "'To know Yahweh' refers to a practical, religio-ethical relationship," and other scholars agree.[106] Indeed, a close study of the recognition formulae in Exodus and Ezekiel suggests that ידע in those places has far more to do with one's experience *of* God than with any comprehension of doctrinal points *about* God.

The formulae of Exodus and Ezekiel imply a knowledge of God which is not to be associated with schooling and mere intellectual capacity. This "knowledge" is to be construed differently from the wisdom literature theme of "seeking knowledge," which is closely related to "wisdom" (חכמה); this "knowledge" is not gained by human beings through any pursuit of their own—any quest, study, or test (see Prov. 2:4-5).[107] Rather, it is a personal knowledge gained as God's acts and self-revelation grip the whole person and, in

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[104] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 8.

[105] The verb has an extremely broad semantic range, according to the lexicons (e.g., *DCH*, vol. IV: 99-110, with an additional two pages [111-12] listing such distinct meanings of ידע that they may indicate separate lexemes). Botterweck writes, "The great semantic range of *yāḏaʿ* from purely apperceptive knowledge to 'be careful of, pay attention to' is clear from its use in parallel with *śîm*, 'take to heart'" ("ידע *yāḏaʿ*," *TDOT*, vol. 5: 462). Here we are concerned with understanding ידע with "Yahweh" (or כי אני יהוה) as the object.

[106] Botterweck, "ידע *yāḏaʿ*," *TDOT*, vol. 5: 469. Cf. Terence Fretheim, "ידע," *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2: 413.

[107] If there is a similarity between the ידע of the recognition formula in Ezekiel/Exodus and the דעת of the Old Testament wisdom literature, it may be a certain loose connection to the theology of the "fear of Yahweh" (with resultant submission to God, pursuit of holiness, discipline) which is said to be the "beginning of knowledge" in the book of Proverbs (1:7; 9:10; cf. 2:5).

the case of God's gracious deliverance, lead to conversion and begin to inform all of life. One of Ezekiel's variations on the formula definitely points in this direction, toward a personal knowledge of God. Yahweh declares, "I will bring you against my land, so that the nations *may know me*, when I show my holiness through you before their eyes, O Gog" (38:16).[108] This observation helps explain the tight linkage of God's action in people's lives and their knowledge of him. They had experienced Yahweh's hand on their lives (Psa. 139:5) for judgment, and there was no denying the "knowledge" they had gained. The judgment Yahweh had brought upon his people (or the nations) was such that it could be explained as a sign in which he was revealing himself.

Relatively few expansions of the strict recognition formula, both in Exodus and Ezekiel, call the reader's attention to doctrinal points (propositional truths) in the area of Theology Proper. An example would be the holiness of God which leads him to sanctify his people (Exod. 31:13; Ezek. 20:12). The infrequent addition of the title אדני to the name יהוה in the formula structure might indicate to the reader that Yahweh is Lord over all and that his sovereign power commands attention. Such doctrinal truths about God should be seen as subordinate to the less-specific, experiential knowledge of Yahweh. It is accurate to say that the formula is not intended to direct our attention to the various attributes of God; that is not its main thrust, either in Exodus or Ezekiel.[109] This is not to deny that there is regularly a connection between the knowledge of propositional truths about God and the experiential knowledge of God.[110]

It may be asked, what does the recognition formula suggest negatively as it is spoken to Israel and the nations? Does it mean that they do not *know* him?[111] Does it indicate that

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[108] Previously in this chapter a couple other texts making this point were noted: 38:23; and 35:11 (see footnote 47). One may add to these texts Yahweh's assertion that those in Israel who escape the nation's judgment "will remember *me*" (6:9). A very personal knowledge is indicated. Cf. the Jeremiah versions of the recognition fornula (9:24 [MT 9:23]; 24:7), which speak of "knowing *me*, that I am Yahweh." See also the Jermianic indictments of Israel for not knowing Yahweh: 2:8; 4:22; 8:7; 9:3 [MT 9:2]; 9:6 [MT 9:5].

[109] Zimmerli agrees with this assessment, basing his conclusion on form-critical grounds, i.e., his notion of "proof-sign." See *I Am Yahweh*, 79.

[110] Fretheim, too, makes this point where he writes, "Knowing God leads naturally into, and cannot be separated from, a more specific content of the knowledge of God . . ." ("ידע," *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2: 413).

[111] Ezekiel does not include this specific indictment of the people, as Hosea and Isaiah had (see Hosea 2:8 [10]; 4:1, 6; 5:4; and Isaiah 52:5-6; 56:10).

they do not know him *as Yahweh?* One of the charges leveled at the nation of Israel in Ezekiel 23 may point the way forward to a partial answer to the question regarding Israel. Yahweh declares, "Because *you have forgotten me* and thrust me behind your back, bear (נשׂא, Qal impv.) the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution!" (23:35). When this charge is combined with other accusations referring to the nation's failure of memory (22:12 with שׁכח; 16:22, 43 with לא זכר) or with assertions that Israel will "remember" as the result of Yahweh's actions (6:9; 16:61, 63; 20:43; 36:31), the interpreter notices a pattern and theme.[112] To know Yahweh is to remember both his saving acts and his acts of judgment and to respond appropriately. Failure to know or recognize Yahweh results from a failure to remember his mighty acts. Israel would not "know" until her historical memory was jogged, and Ezekiel delivers divine oracles that would accomplish that very purpose.

Ezekiel's recognition formula is but one example among many of the prophetic *Rückblick* to Israel's covenantal foundations, especially Yahweh's salvation and claiming a people for himself at the time of the Exodus. The recognition formula not only accompanies the necessary "history lesson" in an interpretive role (20:12, 20, 26), it may be regarded as part of the history lesson, as an echo of the book of Exodus itself.[113] And the formula points to Yahweh's single-minded, consistent purpose throughout Israel's history.

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[112] The motif of remembering in Ezekiel's prophecy is quite complex. Not only does Israel fail to remember what she ought, she recalls to mind what she ought not. What she has remembered from her past is the sin of her youth, not her salvation. Yahweh censures Israel for remembering Egypt with all its idols (23:19), and he pledges that that memory with its baneful, evil influence would be expunged for good (23:27). Also, the book of Ezekiel refers to Yahweh's remembering Israel (16:60), and this is the language of the covenant. Helpful for researching the use of זכר in the Old Testament are: Brevard Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, 1962); W. Schottroff, *'Gedenken' im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament*, Second ed., WMANT 15 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967); H. Eisling, "זכר *zākhar*," in *TDOT*, vol. 4: 64-82; and Leslie C. Allen, "זכר," *NIDOTTE*, vol. 1: 1100-06.

[113] The literary theory of "echo" was developed in the humanities by English scholar John Hollander and has come to be used in biblical intertextual studies too (Richard B. Hays can be mentioned in this regard). According to Timothy K. Beal, "The figure of echo concerns both the means by which texts relate and a more general theory of textuality. Texts echo other texts, and as such can be understood as 'echo chambers.' In an echo chamber—that is, in a literary context for echoing—any text being echoed will *sound* differently than it has elsewhere. One value of the theory is that it expresses the intertextual character of all writing while maintaining, in the metaphor at least, a sense of closure (walls) around the text's structure. There can be no echo in a wide open 'field.'" (Timothy K. Beal, "Glossary," *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell [Louisville: Westminster/JKP, 1992], 21).

The nation would "know that I am Yahweh" in recalling both deliverance and judgment at the time of the Exodus and in recognizing Yahweh's hand in her present judgment and future deliverance. With regard to other nations in Exodus and Ezekiel, their knowing is an awareness and identification of Yahweh as the God of Israel. Yahweh is the God of Israel, by turns fighting for his people (Exod. 14:25; Ezek. 38:23), showing himself holy in Israel (Ezek. 37:28; 38:16; 39:7) or punishing them for unfaithfulness (Ezek. 39:23).

6. The Recognition Formula's Link To Covenant

a. The Biblical Evidence

Leslie Allen has made reference to "the covenant goal of recognition of Yahweh"[114] in the book of Ezekiel. To what extent is the recognition of Yahweh connected to the covenant or covenantal in nature? Many factors have led scholars to view the recognition formula against the backdrop of covenant,[115] and these factors are worth enumerating. (1) The formula makes its first appearance in the canon of Scripture set within a series of promises following Yahweh's statements, "I also made a covenant with them" and "I have remembered my covenant" (Exod. 6:4, 5-8).[116] (2) That same initial occurrence of the recognition formula at Exod. 6:7 has what Zimmerli might term "framing introductory formulas" (*rahmenden Einleitungsformeln*)[117] on either side (6:6, 8; cf. v. 2): אני יהוה. That formula serves as the key theological component of the recognition formula, but where it appears independently in Exodus, Ezekiel, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, it also commonly names the God speaking as him who brought Israel out of Egypt and bound

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[114] Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, p. 12.

[115] Beyond the issue of the *formula's* covenantal significance, two prominent scholars have in recent years argued that covenant is the underlying concern of the entire book of Ezekiel. See Lawrence Boadt, "The Function of the Salvation Oracles in Ezekiel 33 to 37," *Hebrew Annual Review* 12 (1990): 1-21; and Michael Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel" (previously cited).

[116] The single "true" recognition formula found in Deuteronomy (29:6) is also firmly in a covenant context, whether or not one interprets 29:1 [MT 28:69] and its reference to ברית as attaching to the preceding chapters or introducing chapter 29. On this exegetical problem see H. F. van Rooy, "Deuteronomy 28,69 - Superscript or Subscript?" *JNSL* 14 (1988): 215-22; J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 401-2, and the literature he cites.

[117] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 13 (*Gottes Offenbarung*, 23).

them to himself in covenant at Sinai.[118] (3) Once again, that initial recognition formula in Exodus 6 immediately follows the so-called covenant formula, "you shall be my people and I shall be your God," and the two formulae frequently appear together in Scripture as the result of "highly conscious reflection."[119] (4) Throughout Ezekiel, nearly every place one finds reference to covenant, one finds the recognition formula close at hand.[120] (5) It has been argued that in some contexts the verb ידע has clear covenantal significance[121] and that it finds use in Ancient Near East suzerainty treaties. (6) It is commonplace among scholars to refer to the name יהוה as God's covenant name, especially because of its revelation/ reiteration in Exodus 3 and 6;[122] therefore the phraseology, to "know that I am *Yahweh*," would seem to imply a covenantal recognition of some sort. (7) Covenant is also tied into the recognition formula by the not infrequent expansion which adds אלהיכם or אלהיהם ("your God," or "their God") to the end of the refrain (Exod. 6:7; 16:12; 29:46; Ezek.

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[118] See Exodus 20:2 [with אנכי]; Lev. 11:45; 18:2-5; 19:36; 22:31-32; 25:38; 26:13, 44-46; Num. 15:41; Deut. 5:1-6.

[119] This is demonstrated and discussed in Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula*, 91f. (*Die "Bundesformel,"* 92f.). Cf. Jer. 24:7, which reads, "And I shall give to them a heart to know me, that I am Yahweh, and they shall be my people and I shall be their God."

[120] Using Zimmerli's delineation of oracles in the prophecy (Table 5), one finds that every occurrence of the term "covenant" except one (44:7) stands within an oracle which also contains the recognition formula.

[121] See, for example, H. B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew *yāda'*," *BASOR* 181 (1966): 31-37; idem, and S. B. Parker, "A Further Note on the Treaty Background of Hebrew *yāda'*," *BASOR* 184 (1966) 36-8; W. Schottroff, "ידע *yd'* erkennen," *THAT*, vol. 1, 691-93; Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, WBC (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), 53, 60. More recently W. Randall Garr has pressed this argument in "The Grammar and Interpretation of Exodus 6:3," *JBL* 111.3 (1992): 385-408, especially pp. 406-08. Gordon Hugenberger (*Marriage as Covenant*, VTSup 52 [Leiden: Brill, 1994]) also supports this interpretation of the usage of the lexeme (see especially 267-73), and he challenges the contradicting arguments of Botterweck (s.v. "ידע *yāḏa'*," *TDOT*, vol. 5: 478) and E. W. Nicholson (*God and his People* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1986], 80). This study does *not* seek to demonstrate that the verb in Ezekiel's recognition formulae, ידע "to know," consistently indicates "mutual legal recognition on the part of suzerain and vassal" (Huffmon, "The Treaty Background," 34). It would be contrary to the evidence presented earlier in this chapter to suggest that Yahweh could be "recognized" by the *gôyîm* as their covenant Lord. They might, however, recognize him as Israel's divine suzerain, who can act in vengeance to protect his covenant people (Exod. 14:25).

[122] See J. A. Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name* (London: Tyndale, 1959); David Noel Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *JBL* 79 (1960): 151-56; Raymond Abba, "The Divine Name Yahweh," *JBL* 80 (1961): 320-28; J. Barton Payne, "הוה (hãwâ)," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, §484; David Noel Freedman, M. P. O'Connor, "יהוה YHWH," *TDOT*, vol. 5: 518; Garr, "The Grammar and Interpretation of Exodus 6:3," 401-408. Henry O. Thompson summarizes an enormous body of scholarship where he writes, "But most important to the biblical tradition, Yahweh is the god [*sic*] of the covenant." (S.v. "Yahweh," *ABD*, vol. 6:1012.)

20:20; 28:26; 34:30; 39:22, 28).[123] The sense of this expansion—which is thought to echo the covenant formula—seems to be that Yahweh had sole claim on Israel's loyalty because he and they were bound together in covenant; faithfulness to Yahweh and the avoidance of all idolatry was of the essence of the covenant (2 Kings 17:35-39).

There is no full understanding, either of the recognition formula or its varied usage, apart from the idea of covenant. However, on the face of things, the connection between the formula and covenant is not always so apparent. For example, what was the covenantal content of the formulae spoken to Pharaoh and Egypt during the days of the Exodus? One might make the same query regarding the formulae addressed to Egypt and the other nations in Ezekiel. There might also appear to be some difficulty in a covenantal interpretation of the judgment oracles against Israel. How were the exiles of Ezekiel's day to comprehend their punishment in terms of covenant?

Already in this chapter the "radical inversion" of the formulae addressed to Israel has been discussed, but a few additional comments are in order before turning to the covenant orientation of the formulae spoken against the nations. If Israel had any real "expectation of God's punitive intervention," which is questionable, she looked for "individual divine acts of judgment"[124] as retribution for individual sins. Possibly, ancient Israel figured on national reversals, but there was no expectation of national destruction. The covenant and the Temple were insurance against such a disaster. In their minds, the covenant could not have indicated or explained the catastrophic events of the several exiles to Babylon. It was unthinkable that Israel could be considered Yahweh's enemy and be punished along with the nations, or, even worse, be punished by the surrounding nations (see Habakkuk 1). That they did in fact suffer such a catastrophe at the hand of Yahweh dealt a blow to their belief system—principally the presumption inherent in that mistaken belief system, cf. Jer. 7:4—from which the exiles would never recover. It was Ezekiel's calling, not to come up with a

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[123] Margaret Odell consistently argues in her dissertation that the recognition formula, "they shall know that I am Yahweh, *their God*," reflects a "covenantal confession" ("Are You He," 128). That "covenantal language provides the frame of reference for interpreting not only the Gog event but also the final modification of expectations embedded in the recognition formula" (146-47).

[124] Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, I. 458.

"new theology" which could incorporate these startling new facts into an existing belief system, but to summon errant Israel back to its foundations, back to a truer understanding of what Yahweh's covenant meant and included for them, and most importantly back to the covenant God whose name is Yahweh.[125] Israel will *remember* the God they have forgotten (6:9; 22:12; 23:35).

Though much of the Jewish nation in Ezekiel's day failed to appreciate the doctrine, he insisted that the unheard-of severity of Yahweh's judgment upon his people was in line with the covenant established with their fathers. The covenant was not being violated or abrogated from Yahweh's side, but was being upheld in the horrors of siege and exile.[126] The book of Deuteronomy stipulates that, among all the curses (כל־הקללות) to fall upon covenant-breakers, there will be reminders of the miseries of Egypt (28:27, 60), plagues (28:21ff.), siege (28:52), and even exile from the land (28:36f.), where sons and daughters will go "into captivity" (בשבי, 28:41), being "scattered among all the nations" (28:64). Also, the lists of covenant curses found in the Pentateuch include a terrifying prediction that, when hard pressed by the enemy, Israel would experience such a famine that parents would eat their children (Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:53-57). Ezekiel reiterates this judgment in his prophecy (5:10), and there is biblical testimony that it did come to pass (Lam. 2:20).[127] These passages shed light on Yahweh's asseveration in Ezek. 6:10, "they shall know that I

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[125] The earlier prophecy of Hosea, if one takes into account its many theological similarities with Ezekiel, is a touchstone on these points. There is in Hosea a prophetic *Rückblick* over the history of the nation, a *Rückblick* which reaches back to the time of David (3:5), the Exodus (2:15; 9:10; 11:1; 12:9, 13; 13:4), and even the patriarchs (12:3-5, 12). The prophet indicts Israel for the great sin of forgetting Yahweh (2:13; 8:14; 13:6) and his Torah (4:6; cf. 8:1, 12). Despite false claims to know Yahweh (8:2), Israel has rejected "knowledge" (4:6); "they do not know Yahweh" (5:4; cf. 2:8; 4:1, 6). A proper punishment would be for Yahweh to return the nation to Egypt (8:13; 9:3; 11:5). The experience of salvation and covenant renewal includes "knowing Yahweh" (2:20; 6:3; cf. 6:6).

[126] The case for this point is convincingly made by Ka Leung Wong in his Edinburgh dissertation, published as, *The Idea of Retribution in the Book of Ezekiel*, VTSup 87 (Leiden: Brill, 2001). This is strongly at odds with the view of A. B. Ehrlich, cited by Greenberg (*Ezekiel 1–20*, p. 291): "If Israel behaves in such a way as to break the covenant with YHWH, YHWH will do similarly and behave toward them contrary to his covenant obligations."

[127] Moshe Weinfeld, in his discussion of the treaty-curses of Deuteronomy 28, is inclined to read such stipulations more as rhetoric (*contra* the view that they are later interpolations which reflect subsequent historical developments). See *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 127, where Weinfeld contends that "maledictions of this type do not necessarily reflect a real situation but belong rather to the typology of the political documents current in the eighth and seventh centuries BC" (cited by Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile*, 101).

am Yahweh; I did not threaten in vain to bring this evil upon them." As argued in chapter five above, the punishments meted out to Israel are regarded by Ezekiel as a divine response to the nation's covenant-breaking. They may be interpreted as covenant enforcement.

Turning to the recognition formulae addressed to the nations in oracles of judgment, the interpreter seeks for some covenantal significance in those refrains. There is indeed a tie to covenant for each formula spoken against the nations. Did not Yahweh's covenant with Israel include reprisals upon all who mistreated his chosen people? Though the term ברית is not found in the promises of Genesis 12:2-3, a covenant structure is apparent with the typical "I will" statements.[128] Yahweh promises, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses (קלל) you I will curse (ארר)" (Gen. 12:3). Examining Ezekiel's formulae spoken against the nations, one discovers that each and every one is accompanied by accusations of wrongs committed against Israel.[129] Other prophetic books contain similar arguments; for example, Joel 3:17-21 [MT 4:17-21] uses the recognition formula and then quickly defines the covenant blessing which God sends as protection from, and punishment of, neighboring nations:

> Then you shall know that I am Yahweh your God,
> who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain.
> And Jerusalem shall be holy,
> *and strangers shall never invade her again.*
> In that day the mountains shall drip with pressed grapes
> and the hills shall flow with milk,
> and all the stream-channels shall flow with water.
> A fountain shall spring forth from the house of Yahweh,[130]
> and shall water the Valley of Shittim.
> *Egypt [however] shall become a desolation,*
> *and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness,*
> *because of violence against the people of Judah*
> *and because they shed innocent blood in their land.*

The same argument, of course, applies in the book of Exodus where the recognition formulae are spoken against Israel's slave-masters in Egypt: Yahweh will be recognized by

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[128] Genesis 12:2-3 contains five divine promises which, translated, take the form of "I will" statements; Genesis 17:3-8 contains five; Genesis 28:13-15 contains four; Exodus 6:6-8 contains seven.

[129] Ammon (25:3, 6); Moab (25:8); Edom/Mt. Seir (25:12; 35:5, 10-15); Philistia (25:15); Tyre (26:2); Egypt (29:6-7); Gog (38:18).

[130] Cf. Ezekiel 47.

both Egyptians and Israelites in the punishment he metes out to the oppressors of the covenant people (Exod 8:22-23; 10:2; 14:4, 18).

Over forty years ago Fensham took up a "problem" in the Old Testament prophets, namely "that maledictions against foreign nations are clothed in the same language as those against a disobedient Israel."[131] His research indicated that there was a close connection between those covenant curses, and that the similarity in calamities pronounced against Israel and the other powers meant "the Lord will punish his disobedient people in the same way as his enemies." In diachronic analysis Fensham drew the following conclusion:

> The important trend of thought was that maledictions against a disobedient people shall overtake them, because they have breached the covenant. Calamities predicted against foreign nations must have developed out of these maledictions.[132]

No matter in which direction the influence runs in the genesis of similar maledictions, the tie to covenant helps the explain the similarity.

Ezekiel's recognition formulae which are included in Yahweh's promises to restore his people have the most obvious covenant content, since they most exactly echo the formulae of Exodus (when context is taken into consideration). Standing out in the midst of a chapter filled with condemnation, one formula reads: "I shall establish (והקימותי) my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am Yahweh" (16:62). Another beautiful formula draws in the themes of covenant and emancipation: "I shall make (וכרתי) a covenant of peace with them, . . . They shall know that I am Yahweh, when I break the bars of their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them" (34:25, 27b). Leading into the concluding chapters' vision of Israel's glorious future, another of Ezekiel's prophecies declares that that covenant of peace will be everlasting:

> And I shall make (וכרתי) a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them. I shall establish[133] them and multiply them, and I shall establish my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations shall know that I Yahweh make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever. (37:26-28)

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[131] F. Charles Fensham, "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties and *Kudurru*-Inscriptions Compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah," *ZAW* 75 (1963): 172.

[132] Ibid., 173.

[133] Following the *DCH*, s.v. "נתן," vol. 5: 802.

Here the effect of the covenant-making for Israel is threefold: the nation will be multiplied in population; they will have Yahweh's glorious presence among them in a restored sanctuary; and they will experience a renewed covenant relationship (expressed in the covenant formula). For the nations, the effect of the covenant-making is the recognition of Yahweh as Israel's God, who sanctifies his people with his own presence.

What stands out to the reader of Ezekiel's salvation oracles is the unconditional nature of the promises to which the recognition formula attaches. We previously noted that Ezekiel 43:11 (without any keynote formula) may perhaps be interpreted as a conditional blessing—if the people of Israel are ashamed of their wicked past, then the prophet will make known to them the design of the new Temple. However, the overwhelming impression left by the promises of Israel's restoration is their unconditionality. The fulfillment of these promises does not await the repentance, obedience, and covenant faithfulness of the people. Rather, the repentance and new obedience are presented as a divine gift, as the "heart-work" of Yahweh who thereby reveals himself to be the sanctifier of Israel (11:19-20; 36:25-27). The blessings of the restoration come as a truly gracious initiative of Yahweh, apparently not as a divine response to any human action. (Once again Ezekiel's theology is seen to have a theocentric orientation.) Yahweh's salvation comes to those who deserve nothing of it; all the mercies shown are based on the character of God and are for the sake of his holy name.

Thomas Raitt has argued that the unconditional nature of the restoration promises in Jeremiah and Ezekiel represents a major shift away from earlier covenant theology with its consistent emphasis upon human obligation (the Mosaic covenant) and its stipulations that the people can find forgiveness only through repentance.[134] The exilic prophets' doctrine of restoration as a wholly gracious gift, based upon the faithful character of God, is said to be without precedent in the Old Testament. In his Cambridge dissertation on Exodus 32–34, R. W. L. Moberly suggests that Raitt's thesis cannot be sustained. He says, "Yet in fact Ex. 32–34 contains precisely such a theology of the Mosaic covenant, and Jeremiah and

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[134] Thomas M. Raitt, *A Theology of Exile: Judgment / Deliverance in Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 106ff., cited by R. W. L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32–34*, JSOTSup 22 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), 189.

Ezekiel may have been explicitly taking their stand within the ancient tradition." Further he writes,

> . . . Ex. 32–34 is the tradition, *par excellence*, which deals with the question of what happens after Israel is unfaithful to her covenant obligations. It presents a theology of the Mosaic covenant in which the covenant is renewed precisely because it depends upon the character of Yahweh as gracious and merciful and not on the people who continue to be stiff-necked and unrepentant. According to our present text, the Mosaic covenant, as the Davidic, rests ultimately upon the faithfulness of Yahweh and as such can hardly be less enduring.[135]

Once again, we are not wide of the mark in positing a strong conjunction between the covenant theology of Exodus and Ezekiel. Yahweh is known in both books as Israel's God of the covenant who will strictly enforce the covenant sanctions, judging the guilty, and will also intervene in the nation's history to uphold his gracious promises.

b. The Extra-Biblical Evidence

Ezekiel scholars may find some extra-biblical confirmation of the recognition formula's covenant orientation in an Assyrian prophecy which was brought to light in the nineteenth century. It may have been Manfred Weippert in 1972 who first drew attention to the connection between "The Covenant of Aššur" and the biblical *Erkenntnisaussage.*[136] The fascinating oracle was delivered by the prophet "La-dagil-ili" to King Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, *circa* 673.[137] In a desperate conflict with other nations (the Cimmerians and the land of Ellipi), the king entreats his god for help, and Aššur replies that he has heard the complaint of his servant and announces how he has dealt with the threat. Weippert quotes the oracle only in part (K 2401 II 22-25) and his translation reads,

> Deine Feinde bringe ich als Schlachtopfer dar.
> Mit ihrem Blut fülle ich den Fluß.
> Man möge (es) sehen und mich preisen,
> *daß* ich Assur bin, der Herr der Götter!

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[135] Moberly, *At the Mountain of God*, 189, 188.

[136] Manfred Weippert, "'Heiliger Krieg' in Israel und Assyrien: Kritische Anmerkungen zu Gerhard von Rads Konzept des 'Heiligen Krieges im alten Israel,'" *ZAW* 84 (1972): 460-93, especially 481-82. When Weippert mentions the *Erkenntnisaussage* in this connection, he seems to have the full recognition formula in view (in a cuneiform variation).

[137] Fortunately the portion of text within the Covenant of Aššur which is of greatest relevance to this study, "The Second Oracle of Salvation," is well established and without any need for reconstruction. All the other sections have entire lines missing.

The "Second Oracle of Salvation" in full provides the larger literary context, mentioning "covenant," and is worth quoting in the new English translation published by the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project of the University of Helsinki.[138]

Table 10. — "The Covenant of Aššur" (K 2401 / ABRT 1 22f)
"The Second Oracle of Salvation" (*ca.* 673 B.C.)

10 *an-nu-rig* LÚ.*sar-sar-a-ni*! *an*!*-nu-ti*!	10 Now then, these traitors provoked you, had you banished, and surrounded you; but you opened your mouth (and cried): "Hear me, O Aššur!"
11 *us-sa-ad-bi-bu-ka us-se-ṣu-nik*!*-ka*	
12 *il-ti-bu-ka at-ta pi-i-ka*	
13 *tap-ti-ti-a ma-a a-ni-na* ^{d}*aš-šur*!	14 I heard your cry. I issued forth as a fiery glow from the gate of heaven, to hurl down fire and have it devour them.
14 *a-na-ku kil-la-ka as-se-me*	
15 TA* ŠÀ-*bi* KÁ.GAL AN-*e*	
16 *at-ta-qa-al-la-al-la*	
17 *la*!*-ak-ru-ur i-šá-tu lu-šá-kil-šú-nu*	18 You were standing in their midst, so I removed them from your presence. I drove them up the mountain and rained (hail) stones and fire from heaven upon them.
18 *at-ta ina bir-tu-šú-nu ta-za-az*	
19 TA* *pa*!*-ni-ka at-ti-si*	
20 *a-na* KUR-*e us-se-li-šú-nu*	
21 NA_4.MEŠ *aq-qul-lu ina* UGU-*hi-šú-nu a-zu-nu-un*	
22 LÚ.KÚR.MEŠ-*ka uh-ta-ti-ip*	22 I slaughtered your enemies and filled the river with their blood. Let them see (it) and praise me, (knowing) that I am Aššur, lord of the gods.
23 *da-me-šú-nu* ÍD *um-tal-li*	
24 *le-mu-ru lu-na-i*!*-du-ni*	
25 *a-ki* ^{d}*aš-šur* EN DINGIR.MEŠ *an-na-ku-ni*	
26 *an-nu-u šul-mu šá ina* IGI *ṣa-al-me*	26 This is the well-being (placed) before the Image.
27 *tup-pi a-de-e an-ni*!*-u šá* ^{d}*aš-šur*	27 This covenant tablet of Aššur enters the king's presence on a *cushion.* fragrant oil is sprinkled, sacrifices are made, incense is burnt, and they read it out in the king's presence.
28 *ina* UGU *ha-*$^{\flat}$*u-u-ti ina* IGI LUGAL *e-rab*	
29 Í—DÙG.GA *i-za-ar-ri-qu*	
30 UDU.SISKUR.MEŠ *ep-pu-šú*	
31 ŠEM.HI.A *il-lu-ku*	
32 *ina* IGI LUGAL *i-sa-as-si-u*	

[138] Simo Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, State Archives of Assyria (SAA) 9, illustrations eds., Julian Reade, Simo Parpola (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 23-25 (collection 3.3). Parpola draws attention to parallels between this Assyrian oracle and Ezekiel. Others emphasizing the similarities between Assyrian oracles—commonly this one—and Old Testament prophecy in its covenant orientation are: Weippert, "Heiliger Krieg," 482; H. B. Huffmon, "Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," in *IDBSup*, 697-700; F. Charles Fensham, "Malediction and Benediction in Ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament," *ZAW* 74 (1962): 1-9; idem, "Common Trends in Curses of the Near Eastern Treaties and *Kudurru*-Inscriptions Compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah," *ZAW* 75 (1963): 155-75; Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament;* Alan Millard, "La prophétie et l'écriture: Israël, Aram, Assyrie," *RHR* 202 (1985): 125-44; M. Weippert, "Aspekte israelitischer Prophetie im Lichte verwandter Erscheinungen des Alten Orients," in *Ad Bene et Fideliter Seminandum (Festgabe für Karlheinz Deller)*, eds. G. Mauer and U. Magen, 287- 319, AOAT 220 (Neukirchener: Neukirchen-Vluyn; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1988); H. B. Huffmon, "Prophecy, Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy," *ABD*, 5:477-82; and Martti Nissinen, "Die Relevanz der neuassyrischen Prophetie für die alttestamentliche Forschung," in *Mesopotamica – Ugaritica – Biblica*, eds., M. Dietrich and O. Lorentz, 217-58, AOAT 232 (Neukirchener: Neukirchen-Vluyn; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1993), who cites his large scale work on Hosea from 1991 which also discusses this issue.

In what some regard as a bygone era of Old Testament scholarship, there was a strong interest in the "treaty analogy," and many explored the formal and thematic parallels between ANE covenants (mainly international suzerainty treaties) and Yahweh's covenant with the people of Israel. Interest has now waned, and McCarthy is surely right to explain this development as, first of all, a response to "the too-sweeping claims made for the treaty analogy," and, secondly, "an over-reaction of criticism."[139] It would be an unfortunate mistake, however, if the Covenant of Aššur were to be neglected or ignored in this study of Ezekiel's recognition formula.

There are numerous affinities between Ezekiel's oracles and this Neo-Assyrian text. (1) According to the dating schemes of leading scholars, the two are only a century apart: 673 for the Covenant of Aššur and 571 for the last dated oracle of Ezekiel's prophecy, 29:17-21. (2) Both share the genré of prophetic oracle, and both are completely dominated by reported direct divine speech. (3) Both record the deity's announcement of his dramatic intervention in the nation's affairs, and (4) the actions are related to a divine-human covenant relationship. Finally, (5) the deity makes a declaration, somewhat in the style of a recognition formula, of his expectation that his sovereignty be widely acknowledged. Thus it is apparent that we are not seeking to draw a far-fetched analogy, say, between an ANE international treaty in the second-millennium and a divine-human biblical covenant of a much later era.

Parpola has suggested that, among the texts in biblical prophecy, Ezekiel's oracle against Gog and Magog is most similar to the language in the "Second Oracle of Salvation" within the Covenant of Aššur (which we may abbreviate as CA, ii).[140] In Ezekiel 38:22-23 we read,

> I shall execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed and torrential rain and hailstones. Fire and brimstone I shall rain down upon him and his hordes, and the many nations that are with him. So I shall show my greatness and my holiness, making myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am Yahweh.

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[139] McCarthy, "Preface to the Second Edition," in *Treaty and Covenant*, ix.

[140] Parpola, *Assyrian Prophecies*, 24.

In a closer reading of the Neo-Assyrian text and Ezekiel 38, one uncovers still more affinities. There are overwhelming odds militarily in favor of the attacking enemy (CA, ii:10-13, 18; Ezek. 38:11-12, 15-16). In his intervention, the deity makes use of cosmic weapons, (hail)stones and fire from heaven, to overcome the enemy of his people (CA, ii:14-17, 20-21; Ezek. 38:22). All the apocalyptic-type imagery and language lead to a kind of recognition formula spoken by the deity, though it must be admitted that Parpola has supplied the word "(knowing)" in his translation of the Akkadian at CA, ii:24-25: "Let them see (it) and praise me, (knowing) that I am Aššur, lord of the gods." The declaration, "I am Yahweh" or "I am Aššur," functions as the rhetorical conclusion of the oracle section, identifying the deity, and indicating the deity's expectation that the nations acknowledge (or praise) him[141] and his activity in the preceding cataclysm. Later on in the same Covenant of Aššur, there is yet another divine declaration in the style of a recognition formula, but in the mouth of Aššur's companion goddess in the Assyrian pantheon, Ištar.[142] (Why has the deity acted on behalf of her people? She says, "From this you shall see that I am Ištar of Arbela.") Both the "Second Oracle of Salvation" and Ezekiel 38:22-23 are a

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[141] It is interesting how the Akkadian oracle expresses Aššur's expectation of praise from the nations. In biblical scholarship, some choose to read the formula, אני יהוה, as self praise; see K. Günther's article on "אני *ʾanī* ich" in *THAT*, vol. 1: 219, where he writes, "Die Selbstvorstellungsformel . . . ist im alten Orient weit bereitet . . . . Durch Verweis der Gottheit auf eigene Taten und Eigenschaften gewinnt die Selbstvorstellungsformel den Charakter des Selbstlobes (im AT bei Dtjes: Jes 44,24; 45,7; auch in Gerichts- und Disputationsreden; vgl. Westermann, ATD 19, 124-132; H.-M. Dion, Le genre littéraire sumérien de l'»hymne à soi-même« et quelques passages du Deutéro-Isaïe, *RB* 74, 1957, 215-234)." Jan L. Koole chooses to read the recognition formulae in Isaiah in similar fashion. He speaks of "God's self-praise 'I am Yahweh'" (*Isaiah III*, Vol. 2: Isaiah 49-55, trans. Anthony P. Runia, HCOT [Leuven: Peeters, 1998], 70).

[142] In section iv, a continuation of "Word of Ištar of Arbela" (which begins at section iii:16), we read the following oracle in Parpola's translation (*Assyrian Prophecies*, 27). (Note that there are minor breaks, indicated by brackets, which required restoration by comparing with other texts; only in iv:19 is the restoration said to be conjectural.)

> 14 [No]w rejoice, Esarhaddon! [I have be]nt [the four doorjamb]s of Assyria and given them to you; I have vanquished yo[ur enemy. The *mood* of the *people*] who stand with you has been turned upside down.
> 20 [From thi]s you shall see [that] I am [Ištar of] Arbela.

The relationship between Aššur and Ištar in Assyrian theology is treated in Parpola, XXI-XXXI. For discussion of the character of these gods, see the relevant articles in *The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, second edition (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). For similar divine "I-statements" addressed to King Esarhaddon, see *ANET*, 449-50: "Akkadian Oracles and Prophecies" (trans. Robert H. Pfeiffer), "Oracles Concerning Esarhaddon," i.14-24, 30; iii.15.

part of a larger prophecy that speaks repeatedly of a covenant relation between the deity and his people (CA, ii:27, 36; iii:11, 14; Ezek. 16:60-63; 34:25; 37:26). There appear to be good grounds, both biblical and extra-biblical, for a covenantal interpretation of the recognition formula.

C. Defining the Theological Meaning of the Formula in Ezekiel

Thus far this chapter has presented evidence that there are theological conjunctions and disjunctions between the recognition formulae in Exodus and Ezekiel. Exploring both, the conjunctions and disjunctions, takes the reader deep into the theology of the two books and prepares her or him to attempt an answer to the most basic questions about the recognition formula: what does that keynote phrase in Ezekiel mean? What does it mean to "know that I am Yahweh"? What is the formula saying where it appears as a theological conclusion to oracles of judgment or deliverance?

Drawing from all the research presented, we propose that the recognition formula in Ezekiel indicates that the subjects of the verb ידע will assuredly "know" Yahweh, in the sense of recognizing his powerful presence as God, in his acts and his word (which cohere), according to the covenant made with Israel. The keynote formula speaks not so much of knowing something about Yahweh, but of knowing him in his awesome personal presence ("may know me," 38:16). The God of Israel has revealed himself (ידע, Niphal)[143] and spoken his name to his people as a sure guarantee that he will fulfill his covenant promises. "I made myself known to them in the land of Egypt and I swore (lit. raised my hand in an oath) to them, saying 'I am Yahweh your God'" (Ezek. 20:5). As then, so now, Yahweh's acts and word are authoritatively declared with a kind of signature seal, "I am Yahweh," within the recognition formula.[144] And he will be known in those acts and words which, for

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[143] According to *DCH* (s.v. "יהוה," vol. IV: 128), the Niphal of ידע rarely has Yahweh as the subject in the Hebrew Bible. The texts cited are: Exod. 6:3 [allegedly P]; Is. 19:21; Ezek. 20:5, 7; Psa. 9:16 [MT 9:17]. (Hab. 3:2 is noted as another possible text, but that requires an emendation of the Hiphil.) Fascinatingly, with the exception of Psa. 9:16, all these texts relate theologically to the Exodus narratives.

[144] The so-called *Selbstvorstellungsformel*, אני יהוה, only appears three times on its own in Ezekiel's prophecy. In the first text, 20:5, it not only coincides with Yahweh's action in taking an oath (the uplifted hand) to his covenant people in Egypt long ago, it seems to *be* the oath. God is swearing by

the prophet Ezekiel, hark back to previous mighty acts and a previous word of God in the Exodus story.

Yahweh's acts and words together—past, present, and future—direct people to know him in both salvation and judgment. He is profoundly the God of both. Yahweh is the God of deliverance (Exod. 14:1-31; 17:8-16) and gracious provision (plunder, guidance, water, manna, quail) from the time of "the fathers." However, the same Yahweh is to be feared by his enemies (Exod. 9:30) and his own people (Exod. 20:20) as a God of holiness, jealousy, judgment, and wrath against all godlessness. The proclamation of Ezekiel the preacher is that there is life and a refuge *in* Yahweh for those who turn from evil (18:23) to keep faith with him, but there is no life and no refuge *from* him, if one is wicked and unfaithful.

If Yahweh is the covenant name of the God of the Bible, then his actions performed with the attendant recognition formula can be interpreted as covenant enforcement. What should "Yahweh" mean to the nations? That is the name of the deity in covenant with Israel, who fulfills his word of the covenant in defending[145] his people with terrible judgments upon their foes. The nations who have troubled Israel will know the outpoured wrath of Yahweh, perhaps in answer to the prayers of Israel post-586: "Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you!" (Psa. 79:6; Jer. 10:25).[146] And to Israel "Yahweh" will be known as the God of the covenant, who cannot allow his people to repudiate the "love and life bond"[147] of the covenant so as to behave like other nations.

> What is in your mind shall never happen, that which you say [to yourselves]: "Let us be like the nations, like the tribes of the [other] countries and worship wood and stone." As I live, says the Lord Yahweh, surely with a mighty hand, and with outstretched arm, and with outpoured wrath, I shall rule over you! (Ezek. 20:33)

God that he will fulfill his promise. In the second and third texts, 20:7, 19, the phrase אני יהוה asserts God's authority to claim Israel's allegiance and proscribe idolatry. But the phrase is predominantly found embedded in the recognition formula, plus one related statement with the verb ראה (73x).

[145] The nations are never said to "know that I am Yahweh" when Yahweh punishes his people!

[146] "It seems to us indisputable that the event [calling forth the pathos of the psalm] was the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem," say Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger in *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100*, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 304. These authors aver that this "psalm is in an intertextual conversation with the book of Jeremiah" (305), but there are connections with the book of Ezekiel as well, and it is worth reading Psalm 79 alongside both prophets of the exile.

[147] The characterization of the Old Testament ברית given by Professor Gerard Van Groningen, 1988 lecture at Covenant Theological Seminary.

Yahweh is insistent: "I shall make you pass under the rod and bring you into the bond of the covenant" (20:37). He will enforce the covenant sanctions, purging out the rebels, and making certain that his holy name is no longer profaned. In all the judgments, "you shall know that I am Yahweh" (vv. 38-39). "Whether the people listen or fail to listen . . . they shall know" (2:5); ultimately they shall recognize that a prophet was among them and that God has given a compelling self-revelation in word ("I am Yahweh") and in deed.

Yet after Yahweh's severity there will be another chapter opened in which both the nations and Israel will recognize Yahweh in the restoration of the covenant people. The arm which reached out to gather the covenant people from the nations for judgment (20:34-38) will reach out again—another "new Exodus"—to bring a repentant and purified people into "the land I swore to give to your fathers" (20:41-44). Yahweh will then be known through a "covenant of peace," as he protects his people and sends "showers of blessing."

> . . . And they shall know that I am Yahweh when I break the bars of their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those who had enslaved them. They shall no longer be prey to the nations, and the beasts of the land shall not devour them; they shall dwell securely and none shall frighten them. And I shall provide famously productive farms for them, so they shall not be consumed with hunger and shall not suffer any longer the taunts of the nations. They shall know that I, Yahweh, their God am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people. The declaration of Yahweh. (34:27b-30)

To sum up, the recognition formula points to a redemptive covenant in the past and a covenant yet to be, the conclusion of which will be the eternal dwelling of Yahweh with his people. Ezekiel's formula reflects a historical perspective on God's saving acts, asserts that Yahweh acts to reveal himself as covenant Lord in the nation's current situation, and also expresses Israel's only hope for the future: that Yahweh will continue to act in history to reveal himself and to redeem and sanctify his people. According to Ezekiel's theology, Yahweh was, and is, and shall be, the God of Exodus.[148]

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[148] A similar point regarding the book of Isaiah is made by Erich Zenger, "The God of Exodus in the Message of the Prophets as Seen in Isaiah," in *Exodus: A Lasting Paradigm*, eds. Bas van Iersel and Anton Weiler, 22-33 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987).

CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Within this study we have sought to illuminate the literary and theological function of Ezekiel's recognition formula by undertaking a fresh research of its use and especially by identifying and interpreting that keynote formula as one aspect of an intertextual relationship between Ezekiel and the book of Exodus. The research presented here has moved beyond a consideration of Ezekiel's relationship to an Exodus "tradition." That such a relationship exists is widely agreed, and the Bible's recognition formula has often been interpreted with reference to that relationship to the Exodus tradition. For example, Günther discusses the formula in *THAT* and writes, "Erkenntnis Jahwes geschieht im Zusammenhang mit seinem geschichtlichen Selbsterweis (vgl. Exodus-tradition)."[1] Our research, however, has led us beyond talk of "tradition" to explore a textual dimension, in which Ezekiel's prophecy shows "many signs of being influenced by a study of Israel's sacred writings" (Childs).

A. Summary of the Argument

This work argued the specific thesis that the seventy-two recognition formulae in Ezekiel mark a theological nexus and intertextuality between the prophecy and the book of Exodus, and those formulae are best interpreted alongside the numerous recognition formulae in Exodus. With the proposal that Ezekiel signals a dependence upon earlier "Scriptures"—especially the book of Exodus in some authoritative recension—this study ran into critical debate over the compositional history of the Pentateuch and the dating of alleged "documents" or of the literary deposit of Pentateuchal traditions. In building the

[1] K. Günther, "אנכי *ʾanī* ich," *THAT*, vol. 1: 220.

argument at this controversial point, we showed that (1) Old Testament scholarship is presently in such ferment over source analysis, dating Pentateuchal materials, and questions of redaction, that the conclusions of the older *Literarkritik* (e.g., P is post-exilic) are no longer privileged in the debate; (2) a body of exegetical evidence and sophisticated linguistic analysis by the likes of Hurvitz, Fishbane, Rooker, Milgrom, and Levitt Kohn supports the contention that Ezekiel drew from P in some stabilized and authoritative literary deposit; and (3) the presence of several recognition formulae in the allegedly older J/E strata of Exodus would convince many, who perhaps reject the revisionist scholarship cited in #2 above, that those formulae are ancient enough to have influenced all the writing prophets of the Old Testament. Strictly speaking, a pre-exilic dating of P is not necessary for recognizing the influence of the Exodus narratives upon Ezekiel.

Chapter two with its review of scholarship laid a foundation for this work, not only by establishing where and how others previously have built up research on the formula, but also by indicating the problems of controversy and confusion in past scholarship. We noted at least three important points: the first a confusion over the exact number of occurrences of the recognition formula, and the second a controversy over the biblical source[2] influencing Ezekiel's usage of that formula. The third point was the area of theological interpretation. Among other disagreements, scholars dispute whether the recognition formulae addressed to the nations speak of a saving knowledge of Yahweh. The controversies and confusion revealed both the need for further research and opportunities to move beyond existing scholarship.

Chapter three presented the results of basic exegetical spadework focused upon details of the formula's usage in Ezekiel: defining the formula;[3] cataloguing the surprising variety of recognition formulae; confirming the correct tally of formulae; examining genre, syntax, and literary context; searching for "clusters" of formulae; and discussing text-critical and

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[2] The study also noted some of the proposals of a non-biblical source for Ezekiel's recognition formula, but these were not explored. Scholarship has been more intent on studying the formula in its canonical context, looking for a biblical source.

[3] For purposes of this study, the "true" recognition formula was defined as divine speech consisting of the verb ידע and the attached clause, כי אני יהוה, which may be variously expanded. The only exception to this rule was Ezekiel 20:26, where אשר replaces כי.

redaction-critical issues. Because this doctoral study meant to engage in close comparative work, examining Ezekiel's formulae alongside those in other biblical books, chapter three also provided a lengthy appendix with a catalogue of "Recognition Formulae and Related Phrases outside Ezekiel." This appendix proved useful later in the study when we pursued questions of inner-biblical interpretation and intertextuality.

Chapter four was central to the argument of this study. Following chapter one and the criteria set down there for recognizing the phenomena of allusion and inner-biblical interpretation, chapter four presented abundant evidence that Ezekiel alludes to the book of Exodus (J/E and P materials). The linguistic and terminological parallels (A.1.) showed a clear pattern of reference from Ezekiel back, not only to the Exodus story in the prophet's historical retrospectives, and not only to a theological Exodus tradition, but also to Exodus texts. There is a "demonstrable relationship between texts" (van Wolde), with what Fishbane might term "multiple and sustained lexical linkages."[4] This conclusion, arrived at inductively through research of specific examples, served as a deductive "warrant" to read the many similarities of theme, event, and theology in Exodus and Ezekiel as further support for the claim that Ezekiel's prophecy alludes to Exodus (A.2). Additional evidence of a broad Ezekielian dependence upon Exodus was brought forward in the section treating "Ezekiel's Reshaping of Earlier 'Scriptural Traditions'" (A.3); radical revision or "skewing" (Greenberg) of traditional materials was understood as compelling evidence for allusion. We built upon this cumulative case when we averred (section B) that Ezekiel's recognition formulae are one of the "multiple and sustained linkages," are most similar to the formulae in Exodus, and are best understood as another echo of Exodus texts. About ten points of similarity were mentioned, including the amazing correspondence between Exodus 31:13 and Ezekiel 20:12. Ezekiel's recognition formulae were also compared and contrasted with formulae in other books (especially 1 Kings and Isaiah). We judged that a much stronger case can be made for the influence of Exodus upon Ezekiel than for the influence of some northern Israelite prophetic tradition reflected in 1 Kings 20 (Zimmerli's contention).

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[4] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 285.

Because some Ezekiel scholarship is flawed in its lack of attention to the agonizing experience of the Jewish exiles, and because certain rhetorical features of Ezekiel's prophecy can be at least partially explained by researching the socio-historical situation, chapter five examined "the Socio-historical and Religious Context of Ezekiel's Oracles." There is "the need to let suffering speak" (Adorno). Perhaps Ezekiel's multiplication of recognition formulae indicates something about the receptivity of a traumatized and embittered community in exile? When we turned to consider Yahweh's indictment of Israel in her spiritual and moral state (B.4), Ezekiel's allusions to Exodus (as text and event) took on new meaning. Ezekiel traced the rebellion of Israel and her pollution with idolatry all the way back to the nation's sojourn in Egypt. The covenant people had never put away the idols of Egypt, and Ezekiel declared that Yahweh in response will act as the God of Exodus. The spiritual and moral state of Israel was so grave that a new Exodus done in judgment must precede a new Exodus to usher the saved into the land promised to the ancestors (20:34-38, 41-44). Though Yahweh had made himself known to Israel in Egypt, declaring to them "I am Yahweh" and promising their deliverance, Ezekiel says the people did not forsake their idols. Generation after generation were devoted to their idols, and Israel would not give up the "prostitution she began in Egypt" (23:8, 27). The recognition formula spoken to Israel in Egypt had continuing relevance for the nation in Ezekiel's day, for Yahweh would reveal himself yet again as he put an end to what Ezekiel could have characterized as Israel's old Egyptian habits.

The argument of this study proceeded in chapter six on the premise that Ezekiel as a text generates more meaning in its fuller canonical context, as it is read with other texts. The books of Exodus and Ezekiel have such a density of linguistic and theological links—the recognition formula chief among them—that an intertextual reading is not only justified but even necessary. Focusing more on a synchronic intertextuality of reception than on an intertextuality of production,[5] chapter six offered a theological interpretation of Ezekiel's recognition formulae alongside those in Exodus. We discovered both striking disjunctions and strong conjunctions between Ezekiel and Exodus in the interpretive work. Exploring

[5] Again we note that this differentiation has been borrowed from van Wolde, "Texts in Dialogue with Texts," 4.

both the disjunctions and conjunctions took us deep into the theology of the two books and prepared us to attempt an answer to the most basic questions about our topic of study: what does Ezekiel's recognition formula mean? What does it mean to "know that I am Yahweh"? What is the formula saying where it appears as a theological conclusion to oracles of judgment or deliverance? Such questions lead into our conclusions section.

B. Major Conclusions

This study demonstrated the central importance of Ezekiel's recognition formula in the theological message of the prophecy. The refrain, which is such a prominent and emphasized feature, does "strike the keynote" of the prophecy (Driver), and interpreters are mistaken if they view the refrain as an inelegant repetition or as "Ezechiels theologisches *ceterum censeo*,"[6] tacked on the end of oracles. It is unwisely passed over.

From a rhetorical standpoint, the formula integrates the oracles of judgment and restoration within the book and indicates how all Yahweh's actions are directed toward a single goal: that he be known in his power and holiness as the covenant God of Israel. It is the selfsame God, Yahweh, who destroys in judgment and delivers in mercy, according to his covenant promises. This study concludes, following Daniel Block, that rhetorically the recognition formula transforms the oracles in which it occurs. "Drawing on the exodus narratives . . . this formula transforms Yahweh's oracles from mere announcements of coming events into announcements of Yahweh's self-manifestation."[7] This study asserts that the recognition formula is the key to understanding Yahweh's purposes in his future acts, but it also retains a historical orientation as part of the prophetic *Rückblick* to the covenantal foundations and the Exodus. We remind ourselves that the recognition formula not only accompanies the prophet's "history lesson" in an interpretive role (20:12, 20, 26), it may be regarded as part of the history lesson, as an echo of the Exodus narratives themselves.

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[6] Lang, *Ezechiel*, 96.

[7] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, p. 39.

According to literary analysis, the recognition formula in Ezekiel commonly forms the conclusion (*letzten Bestandteil*) or "target statement of a larger discursive sequence" (*Ziel- und Schlußaussage eines Wortgefüges*).[8] However, the formula is not as consistent in its positioning as Zimmerli argued. The refrain states both the purpose and goal of God's self-revelation in historical events.[9] He acts and, just as importantly, tells the interpretation of his acts in history, so that people should recognize and acknowledge the Actor's claim, "I am Yahweh," the God who maintains the honor of his holy name by keeping covenant.

The research presented in this work confirmed the view of Gerald Bruns, that "the Bible . . . can be read as a self-glossing book."[10] Not only do Ezekiel's oracles hark back to the Exodus event, and to theological traditions related to the Exodus story, they reuse and recontextualize Exodus texts (among other "Scriptures"). The recognition formula is one aspect of this pattern of inner-biblical allusion. This study drew the conclusion that the full meaning of Ezekiel's keynote formula as a text depends upon its interaction with another text, the book of Exodus. We purposed to read the two together and found the exercise fruitful, particularly at the interpretation stage where the formulae were compared and contrasted. (We had already moved past the review of all the recognition formulae in the Old Testament, where we learned that the refrains in Ezekiel and Exodus had the most similarities in terms of structure/formulation, contextual use, and theology [chapter four].)

In the comparison work we looked for both the continuities and discontinuities (conjunctions and disjunctions) and discovered the former are stronger than the latter. One shockingly negative reinterpretation of Exodus material noted was the "radical inversion" (Carley) of the recognition formula's previous usage solely in oracles of salvation for Israel and destruction for Israel's enemies. Ezekiel employs the recognition formula more often

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[8] Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 33 (*Gottes Offenbarung*, 46).

[9] Compare Zimmerli, who writes, "With this peculiar form of proclamation, the prophet not only announces a future act of Yahweh but formulates this announcement in a manner which expresses the hidden intention of Yahweh's act. . . . Yahweh acts, and the goal of that action is the creation of knowledge, the knowledge that he is Yahweh." ("The Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character of Ezekiel's Prophecy," 526).

[10] Gerald Bruns, "Midrash and Allegory," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press [of Harvard University Press], 1987), 626. Cited by Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 39.

in judgment oracles against Israel than in oracles announcing Israel's salvation. The main conjunctions between Ezekiel and Exodus were: (1) no positive use of the formula when spoken to the nations; (2) the formula's strong connection to Yahweh's acts in history; (3) the emphasis that Yahweh acts to reveal his holy name and guard its honor; (4) the irresistibility of Yahweh's self-revelation; (5) similarity in the nature of the knowledge of God implied by the formula; and (6) the formula's link to the covenant motif.

Read alongside the formulae in Exodus, Ezekiel's keynote formula indicates that the subjects of the verb ידע will assuredly know Yahweh in the sense of recognizing his powerful presence as God, in his acts and his word (which cohere), according to the covenant made with Israel. The formula speaks not so much of knowing something about Yahweh (i.e., some propositional truth), but of knowing him in his awesome personal presence. He reveals himself in the subjects' life experience, declaring "I am Yahweh" as a guarantee of his covenant promises. For Ezekiel Yahweh's self-revelation in word and deed runs in a consistent way from the time of bondage in Egypt (Ezek. 20:5) to his own day. And Yahweh insists that he will be known; he will be known as the God of Exodus who enforces the covenant.[11] It may be in a judgment based upon a covenant which Israel broke and the nations culpably ignored. It may, instead, be in acts of salvation based upon a gracious everlasting covenant. Either way, "they shall know that I am Yahweh."

C. Suggestions for Further Research

We conclude by suggesting a few areas open to additional research. First of all, this doctoral work has mentioned several excellent studies in the past of Ezekiel's literary relations to other biblical books. Most of these have not been comprehensive, but have focused upon one particular relationship, say, Ezekiel and P (Hurvitz). Furthermore, many studies have tended to be more limited in scope, treating either linguistic or theological (traditio-historical) issues, but rarely both in-depth. One of the more widely ranging studies, Millar Burrows, is now discounted as quite dated (1925), too brief to begin with, and

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[11] What was begun in the Exodus—all Yahweh's purposes then to take Israel as his people and to be God to Israel—is reiterated in this "formula of the Exodus."

containing odd, skeptical conclusions. There remains a need, then, for a more comprehensive research of Ezekiel's "preoccupation with Scripture" (Childs). With the powerful computer searches now possible, there is new opportunity to pursue such research.

This study of the recognition formula has examined a few instances of intra-textuality in Ezekiel. The narrower topic taken up here has limited our research into this phenomenon mentioned by Boadt; much more could be done to evaluate Greenberg's proposal of the "halving pattern" and Allen's discovery of "parallel echoing." Deeper, more thorough research would undoubtedly uncover many yet unrecognized patterns and reveal much about the prophecy's self-referential character. Much more, too, could be learned this way about Ezekiel's recognition formula and its rhetorical usage.

We have summarized and discussed Zimmerli's proposal of the "proof-saying" or *Erweiswort*. In light of the criticisms leveled against this *Gattung* by Hossfeld and others, a careful review of Zimmerli's proposal would benefit scholarship. Such a review could be undertaken with reference to recent proposals of refinements to form criticism. Form criticism in combination with other hermeneutical approaches, such as Muilenburg's "rhetorical criticism" and discourse analysis, could still be useful in a re-examination of so-called "proof-saying" passages. Careful and detailed exegetical work on many texts would be needed to compensate for form criticism's main flaw of over-generalization.[12]

[12] Here we have in mind Muilenburg's criticisms made in his SBL address. He complained that form criticism as then practiced so stressed "the typical and representative that the individual, personal, and unique features of the particular pericope are all but lost from view. . . . Form criticism by its very nature is bound to generalize because it is concerned with what is common to all the representatives of a genre, and therefore applies an external measure to the individual pericopes. It does not focus sufficient attention upon what is unique and unrepeatable, upon the particularity of the formulation." ("Form Criticism and Beyond," 5).

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